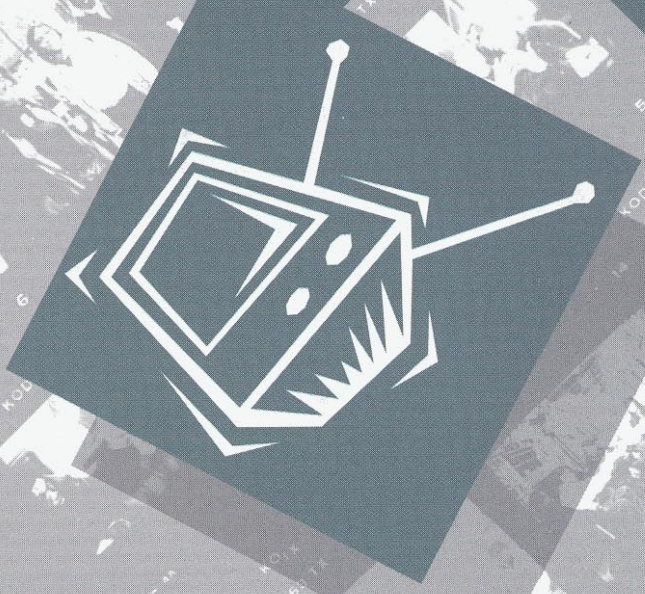
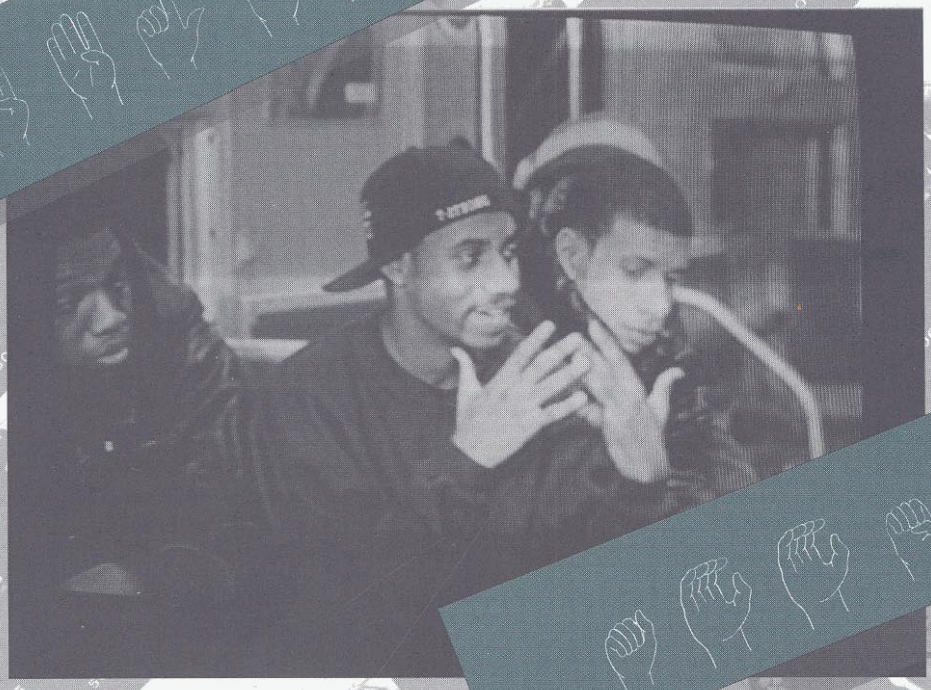
CMR
COMMUNITY MEDIA REVIEW







Making A Difference

The Journal of the
Alliance for Community Media
Volume 18 No. 3

Get in touch with your community

with the

Interactive Video Bulletin Board

















THE CHANNEL THAT TAKES REQUESTS:

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- Ian N. Wheeler, Executive Director, Fairfax Cable Access Corporation

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- Barbara Popovic, Executive Director, Chicago Access Corporation

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Volume 18, No. 3

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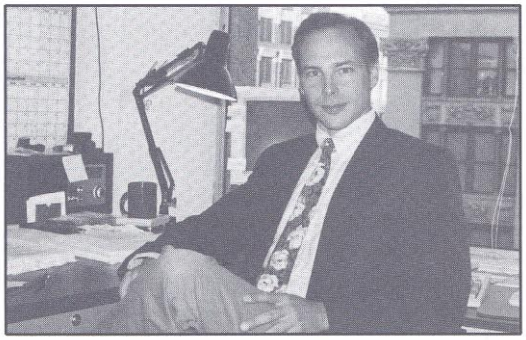
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From the Executive Director

Making a Difference in the National Community

By Barry Forbes

I'm particularly proud that this issue of *Community Media Review* is dedicated to the producers and media centers that make a difference in their local communities. After all, my first experience with public, educational, and government (PEG) access was as a volunteer producer working towards social change in my own local community.



Alliance for Community Media Executive Director Barry Forbes

In a larger sense, the **Alliance for Community Media** works on behalf of its members to make a difference in the national community. By learning from the producers and access centers who positively affect their local communities, I believe that the Alliance can make a greater impact on the national community.

Hallmarks of Success. With my experience in and observation of grassroots efforts, I've noticed that successful organizations usually cope well with internal challenges. First and foremost, these "high-achievers" have a unified vision – a clear sense of who they are and what their purpose is. Second, they have a committed, energetic, and effective leadership. Third, they have attained a level of financial security which allows their leadership to pursue their unified vision. Last, they are adaptable as the world around them changes.

Unified Vision. Several times in the past, the **Alliance Board of Directors** has agonized over the organization's mission and its constituents. As approved in 1992, the mission of the Alliance for Community Media is "to advance democratic ideals by ensuring that people have access to electronic media and by promoting effective communication through community uses of media." The constituents that the Alliance should serve is less clear – and is still being debated. Even muddier is the identity of the organization itself. Some members believe that the Alliance is a sprawl of autonomous collectives (based on geography and interest) rather than a single organization, united behind a single purpose. Much more work is needed to unify our vision, build cooperation, and establish trust between the many organizational elements of the Alliance. I believe that better communication is the key – and the **National Office** is committed to facilitating that dialogue.

Effective Leadership. The Alliance is fortunate in having many dedicated leaders at the national, regional, and local levels. Unfortunately, new leaders spend more time than necessary just learning Alliance procedures – and prospective leaders are often unsure as to how to become involved. For the leadership to become even more effective, I believe the Alliance could create a leadership education and training program and institute a leadership evaluation process. In order to provide our governing and advisory bodies with a wider range of skills, we also need to tap more individuals from outside the Alliance membership. The Alliance could use more professionals with expertise in such areas as financial management and accounting, marketing, public relations, non-profit law, association management, fundraising, electronic and print publication, research, government relations, etc.

Financial Security. The most motivating vision and the best leadership can still be greatly hobbled by financial insecurity. The efforts of the organization can be too easily absorbed by financial concerns rather than focused on creating an impact. I believe that this is the greatest challenge facing the Alliance right now. Ironically, the problem stems from generosity rather than mismanagement or impoverishment. Traditionally, membership dues have been established more for an eye toward what is considered "affordable" rather than by what a particular service actually costs. Here are two examples: 1)Based on the 1995 budget for direct and indirect costs, the average annual cost of providing one membership is around $61.00 — and yet the majority of members pay $25 or $35; and 2)The budgeted direct and indirect costs of the **Hometown Video Festival** divided by the number of entrants is about $43 — yet the average paid by the entrants is about $35.

The Alliance has already used cost allocation calculations to assure that the 1995 conference registration fees will actually cover the full expenses of the event. In order to achieve financial stability, the Alliance must use the same approach in determining membership and Hometown fees right now. (By the way, the National Office has not received a single complaint about the increased conference prices – which were raised between $50 and $105 for the full conference.)

Adaptability. The world changes around us. Our only choices are to evolve and thrive – or stagnate. For community media, the change is most dramatic in the areas of technology, legislation, and regulation. As a national membership organization, the Alliance must adapt its internal structure and external strategies in order to deal effectively with these changes. Fortunately, the National Board of Directors is currently focusing its energies in guiding this evolution. The Board is both working closely with the National Office to improve our financial stability and engaging in a long-range strategic planning process. Already the **Strategic Planning Committee** (chaired by **Julie Omelchuck** of the **Mount Hood Regulatory Commission**) has facilitated two Board planning sessions.

Alliance "Mega-strategies." At its September 1994 meeting, the Board identified four "mega-strategies" which

See *Making A Difference*, page 16...

AII
ACM Gets Connected

by Kari Peterson

Progress on the Electronic Front. There has been a tremendous amount of interest in the last year in the **Internet,** the **World Wide Web** and these electronic mailing lists sometimes referred to as "listservs." These terms have become a prominent part of our lexicon. Some of us are 'doing it' already and smugly talking about how great it is. Those of us who are not yet doing it, want to be doing it and need to know how. Some of us are even questioning the value of it all, but then that's to be expected.

The **Alliance Information Infrastructure Committee,** formed at last summer's national board meeting in Hawaii, has been considering this universe of new services, technology and terminology and has been focusing its efforts in three major areas in order to best serve the Alliance, its members and the vast, untapped supporter network out there.

The Web. The committee's efforts in this area are aimed at establishing a "presence" for the Alliance on this growing WWW network. Everyone and his sibling wants to develop a "web site," an electronic repository full of information and pictures, that tells their story. Having a **URL** (an address on the Web) is a symbol of one's coming of age; a statement of one's savvy and awareness – not to mention a wonderful service to provide. Be assured, the Alliance is moving right along with this trend. Committee member **Dirk Koning** is heading up this project and he has been working with **Alliance Executive Director Barry Forbes** in the national office and volunteers from Columbus, Ohio who, under **ACTV Executive Director Laurie Cirivello**'s direction, are creating the official **Alliance Home Page** and Web page links. We should all be hearing very soon about their progress. The Alliance web site will offer a full array of Alliance information, from public policy updates to member services information to board minutes. Watch for the Alliance's own URL to be released soon!

By the way, the committee would like to thank the many folks who volunteered their services to this project. This is a huge undertaking and we felt, for reasons of consistency and clarity, that we needed to identify a single group for our initial web development. The Web has spawned a growing number of people, both professionals and hobbyists, who are now involved in Web development. We support and encourage the development of Web sites for all access centers and look forward to providing links to them from the Alliance site. In our next column, we will feature a list of existing access center web sites. If you have one, or know of one, please send the URL to *kapeters@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us.*

Electronic Mailing Lists. Electronic mailing lists, sometimes referred to as "listservs," are programs which distribute electronic mail to a group of people who are subscribed to a particular list. So, for example, if an individual sends a message to the list, a message is automatically sent to everybody on the list. Participating in electronic mail lists requires one to have access to a computer, modem and an e-mail account.

The committee has been considering the creation of a number of electronic mailing lists. At first pass, the committee thought of nearly 40 subject areas which might be of value to our members. These ranged from lists which would be dedicated to specific subject areas, like public policy, training, or government access, to lists which would be defined by region, like the Southeast region, for example. The committee also considered lists for internal use, for example the **Information Services Committee** might maintain a list for all those interested in this committee's work, or the **ACM Board of Directors** may have a list dedicated to board issues. Initially, we decided to go with one mailing list which would serve as a catch-all. The Northwest Region had agreed to open up their list to members from all over the country to discuss any topic. To date, over 200 people are subscribed to this list and discussion rages on a huge variety of subjects. Participants include access producers, center staff, industry professionals and interested bystanders. As we reach critical mass, more lists will be

See *Alliance,* page 31...



by Paul LeValley

Having learned my vocabulary words and studied the simple instructions written down for me by a friend, I took my first tentative steps onto the information superhighway. ***HELLO...IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?*** This was the best I could come up with, not having anything particular to say. So I tagged the subject line "question for the group" and crossposted it to 15 or 20 unrelated news groups and sat back to see what would happen. Well, as every nethead (netician, netoid, chiphead, cybergeek) knows, by so doing, I violated several of the fundamental laws of the electronic frontier. And I learned, as all greenhorns quickly learn, that justice on the frontier is swift and sure.

By the next day, I had several dozen well-deserved (but terribly harsh nonetheless) messages suggesting that I get a clue or get lost. My confidence shaken, but determined to go on, I consulted my computer coach. *Note: These people are handy and easier to come by than you might think. I've found that many "computer types" are eager to share their knowledge and will spend literally hours guiding rookies through cyberspace. They've also ususally got great toys.* Anyway, he patiently explained to me that the Internet is a communication medium like any other and that there were, if not hard and fast rules, conventions and codes of behavior that every polite

See *Netiquette!*, page 24...

Public Policy Report

Federal Court Shuns the People in Favor of Cable Company Censorship

by Alan Bushong

"This decision is an unmitigated disaster to Americans who believe they have a right to discuss our laws and to encourage peaceful redress of grievances in our public forums, electronic or otherwise."
–Barry Forbes, ACM Executive Director

As many readers will already know, the **Alliance for Community Media** will appeal the June 6, 1995 decision by the **U.S Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit** to allow cable operators to censor PEG and leased access channels. The full panel reversed the decision of a three judge panel in November of 1993 which found **Federal Communications Commission** censorship rules and the section of the **1992 Cable Act** which authorized the rules to be unconstitutional. The Alliance will be joined in the appeal again by coalition partners **People for the American Way** and the **Alliance for Communications Democracy.** The law firm of **Shea & Gardner,** which handled the original case and appeal, has offered to continue their pro bono services on the case.

"The first five words of the First Amendment are 'Congress shall make no law.'"

Public Policy Committee and **Public Policy Council** members voted unanimously to pursue this case, which reaches to the core of the Alliance's commitment to assure everyone's access to electronic media. While the commercial media, some in the telecommunications industry and a few elected officials continue to trivialize the issue as "keeping the smut off TV," the issue is more serious and more complex, relating to people's meaningful ability to "speak for themselves."

The Court Decision. The Court decided by a 9-2 vote to allow FCC rules which permit cable operators to censor public access programs, and decided by a 7-4 vote to allow rules providing for censorship of leased access programs. The court thus restored a last minute floor amendment added without any committee consideration to the 1992 Cable Act, which enables cable operators to prohibit access programming "which contains obscene material, sexually explicit conduct or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct."

In doing so, the court reversed course on two fundamental principles. First, by limiting speech which has constitutional protections, the court found that a public access channel is not a public forum, in which all constitutionally-protected speech is appropriate; and second, that the Cable Act and FCC rules do not constitute a "state action" subject to the First Amendment because the law permits but does not order cable operators to censor the channels. The Alliance will challenge both points.

The public forum. For nearly 25 years, public access channels have served as a public forum, connecting speakers and viewers. Federal law and many local cable franchises upheld the right of local communities to reserve a small portion of cable channel space for use by the public as partial compensation for cable company use of public property to make money.

Expression is limited by the bounds of constitutional protection; programs containing libelous materials, obscenity or unlawful uses of copyrighted materials lacked protection. In the 1984 Cable Act, Congress reaffirmed the public forum, stating in the legislative report:

"One of the greatest challenges over the years in establishing communications policy has been assuring access to the electronic media by people other than the licensees or owners of those media. ... A requirement of reasonable third-party access to cable systems will mean a wide diversity of information sources for the public — the fundamental goal of the First Amendment — without the need to regulate the content of programming provided over cable."

Public access channels are often the video equivalent of the speaker's soap box or the electronic parallel to the printed leaflet. They provide groups and individuals who generally have not had access to the electronic media with the opportunity to become sources of information in the electronic marketplace of ideas. PEG channels also contribute to an informed citizenry by bringing local schools into the home, and by showing the public local government at work.

Depriving the public of the forum. The U.S. Court ruling violates this principle of public forum in several ways. First, the federal government has "deputized" cable companies to serve as censors. Second, with the exception of obscenity, which always has been unprotected expression and illegal to program on public access channels, the FCC rules allow cable operators to ban legal expression. Third, the ruling removes cable operator statutory liability exemption for access channels, placing a monetary gun to the head of the censor. Given a long history of cable operators seeking full editorial control, the new motivation merely adds fuel to the fire.

Only a court of law – not cable operators or access channel managers – can determine the presence of obscenity. The review of an access program for obscene material must be swift, and cannot be performed vigilante style by those outside the courts.

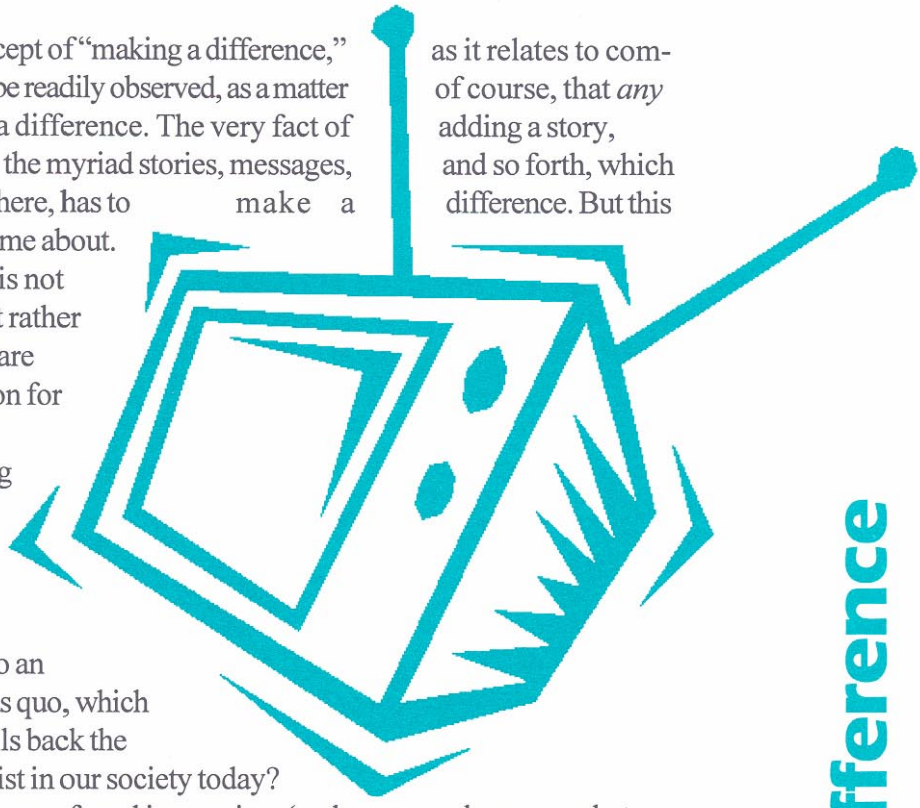
"Deputizing" cable operators is a state action. The first five words of the First Amendment are "Congress shall make no law." While asserting that the proposed access censorship is a state action may seem procedural in nature, the First Amendment is more easily applied to actions of government. The Alliance's

See *Public Policy Report,* page 15...

What's the Difference?

by Uriel Grunfeld

There is a sense in which the concept of "making a difference," as it relates to communication, is trivial. For it can be readily observed, as a matter of course, that *any* act of communication makes a difference. The very fact of adding a story, message, narrative, what-have-you, to the myriad stories, messages, and so forth, which are already circulating in the public sphere, has to make a difference. But this isn't necessarily something to write home about.



Or is it? Maybe the real question is not about making a difference as such, but rather concerns the kinds of differences that are being made? For example, one criterion for making *a difference that matters* is suggested by those who equate making a difference with effecting a material change in the social structures of power and privilege. According to such a criterion, the question to ask is: Does the communicative act amount to an intervention which challenges the status quo, which instigates social change, and which rolls back the inequities and abuses of power that exist in our society today?

Seemingly less dramatic, but just as profound in my view (and also somewhat more difficult to grasp), is another aspect of making a difference. The emphasis here has less to do with the outcome of the making of difference, than there is a concern with the making of difference as an ongoing, dynamic process. We make differences, all of us, by continually drawing and redrawing the lines by which we discriminate what belongs where and what goes along with what. Most importantly, we attempt to determine who we are and who we are not, which social groups we ourselves belong to and which we do not belong to. Which is to say that we are constantly enmeshed in acts of communication and engaged by the dynamics of identity formation. From this perspective, the central issue to be addressed does not so much concern the *effects* of the communicative act (outcome), as it is about the *relationship* of the communicative act to our own selves (process); it is not so much about the *kinds of difference* that are being made, as it is about the different *kinds of making* that are being performed. The question to ask is: To what meaningful extent do we participate in actively defining, interrogating and negotiating the boundaries of our own identities against a social backdrop that is forever shifting ground?

The distinction I am describing, between different approaches to the topic of "making a difference" as it relates to the act of communicating, is by no means meant to be a strict, either/or type of division. Whether consciously or not, we all entertain various notions about making a difference at various times, and on occasion we probably hold on to more than one notion simultaneously. It is possible to identify a productive moment, I believe, precisely in the area of tension between the different conceptual frameworks. The articles included in this section of the ***CMR*** all, in one way or another, take up the problematic of what it means to make a difference. I trust that the readers of this issue will each in their own way find something useful to appropriate and use toward the end of negotiating their own identities.

Community Media Centers

Access as an Alternative Media Practice

by Bob Devine

A lot of the buzz in **Alliance for Community Media** circles these days involves discussion of the evolution of our present cable access centers into the community media centers of the future. This re-thinking of the public access television mission in light of the emerging information infrastructure involves broadening the framework of operations to include access to the Internet, computers, desktop publishing, cable radio and a widening array of access technologies, services, training and support. Providing citizens with expanded access to the information marketplace and the support necessary to have voice and participate more fully in public debate and civic life seems to be a natural extension of the twin mandates of public access – to guarantee the rights of free expression and to invigorate local political discourse.

While some are critical of the movement of public access toward full-service community communication and characterize it as "nothing less than a survival strategy" (Osborn, 1994, p. 32), I would like to interrogate the idea on slightly different terms. The questions have to do with 1) What kind of a difference(s) do we intend to make in the communities that we serve, 2) How, specifically, will new media, technologies and information systems contribute to making a difference, 3) what are the relationships, roles, interactions and outcomes that might characterize an alternative media practice, and 4) what are the structural characteristics of various media systems and practices that might lend themselves to the mission of "making a difference".

It's not at all clear to me that the infobahn technologies represent a step forward for public access. One risks being branded a Luddite for being critical of (and possibly condemning) these technologies and systems that seem to hold so much promise for improving citizen access and equity in an information economy, but I was encouraged recently by a passage in Kirkpatrick Sale's fine book on the Luddites:

> *"It was not all machinery that the Luddites opposed, but 'all Machinery hurtful to Commonality,' as that March 1812 letter stated it, machinery to which their commonality did not give approval, over which it had no control, and the use which was detrimental to its interests... It was machinery, in other words, that was produced with only economic consequences in mind, and those of benefit to only a few, while the myriad social and environmental and cultural ones were deemed irrelevant."* (Sale, 1995 pp. 261-262)

"It's not at all clear to me that the infobahn technologies represent a step forward for public access."

The assumption driving the wholesale adoption of the "community media" idea by the public access community is that all of the emerging information technologies and systems involved will benefit the commonality. As we all know, however, technologies are not value neutral, and the use of particular technologies furthers some interests and agendas while masking or ignoring others. And so I would like to propose some criteria and characteristics of access as an alternative media practice which might be used as a frame of reference in thinking about the manner in which new technologies and services may or may not contribute to the access mission and to making a difference.

Engagement with the Local. In discussing the debate over the "wonders that the new communications technologies... will bring to Americans," for example, Sally Alvarez notes that

> *"...there is an implicit equation in this debate between individual communication (e-mail, BBS, forums, etc.) and public sphere participation. It is easy but dangerous to confuse the two. The bulletin boards and forums provide a form of public exchange, but they facilitate individual exchange across national and international boundaries, rather than local exchange, participation, or action, which has historically been essential to democracy. These forms do not facilitate group activity on issues of common interest that pose a challenge to power structures within the community."* (Alvarez, 1994, pp. 6-7)

The sort of "virtual" communities of interest engendered by information superhighway interaction do not necessarily lead to organized and collective action, do not build consensus and mutual respect, do not necessarily require responsibility-taking, and do not sustain the continuity required for local self governance in the same way that face-to-face interaction does. These technologies may, in fact, direct the user's attention entirely away from the local context that public access is meant to address.

Public, or community access has always been about expression and the practice and production of culture, particularly that which is grounded in the local community. It is about diversity, particularly as it relates to permitting and sustaining a "multitude of voices" in a local "marketplace of ideas". It is about community, and the manner in which people reason together, air their differences, discuss their concerns, and build common understandings. The activity is formally designated as "public access," while the movement that supports it often references itself as "community access" or "community television." The "public" terminology is used in the sense of indicating a space for democratic deliberation that falls outside of the realm of the state or of market relations. The "community" terminology is employed in terms of the root which it has in common with "communication" – communis – which implies some sort of "holding in common" The activities of access involve bringing citizens into the common public and civic life of the local community and focusing public attention on the variety of ideas, cultures and means of expression that comprise the local community.

One frame of reference for evaluating "alternative" access technologies, systems

See *Access*, page 18...

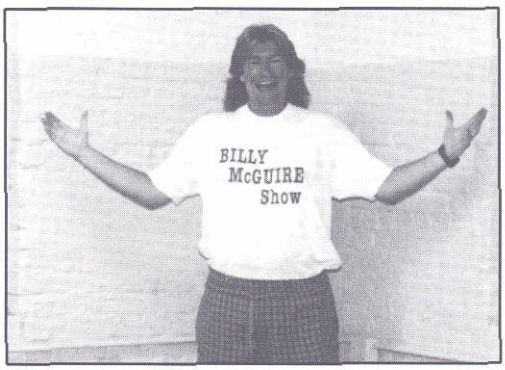
A Hero in Chicago

Getting the Lead Out of Our Schools

Dear *CMR,*

I would like to tell you about my son, **Billy McGuire.** Billy is a teacher at the **Armour School** located at 950 West 33rd Place in Chicago. He has organized sports teams, coached, taught students the importance of recycling and has been mentioned often in the Bridgeport news for his accomplishments and contributions.

For years Billy had been complaining about the terrible working conditions as his school: chipping and peeling paint; paint falling on the students during class; rainwater leaking in through the walls, ceiling and light fixtures, leaving puddles in the classroom; saltpeter showing through the bricks in the lunchroom, and chipping and peeling paint falling onto students and even into their lunches. (It was later discovered the paint contained unacceptable levels of lead.) Billy complained for years by bringing these problems to the attention of the school's principal, the **Board of Education** and the **Health Department.** But nothing was ever done.



When schoolteacher Billy McGuire produced a public access TV exposé, the peeling lead paint was removed from the walls of his school.

Billy knew he must somehow help the students eat and learn in a safe environment. So he produced a video which detailed the dangerous working and learning conditions at the school. The show aired on **Channel 19,** a public access station in Chicago. As a result of his show, Billy was interviewed by a news station and things started to happen.

Now, one year later, the Armour School has a revamped entryway, a rehabbed gym, three totally patched and repainted classrooms, including the kindergarten. The lunchroom is brand new, and the eating area has been scraped clean of lead paint.

I am very proud of my son Billy for being diligent and strong in an attempt to help the youth of our city. Thanks to Billy, the students can now learn and eat in a safe environment. Who knows how many young lives may have been spared the ills of lead paint poisoning thanks to him!

I am proud of Billy and believe he should be recognized and saluted as one of Chicago's true heros.

Thank you,

Edward McGuire

An Invitation to Join the

Alliance for Communications Democracy

"...increasing awareness of Community Television through educational programs and participation in court cases involving franchise enforcement and constitutional questions about access television."

Become an Alliance Subscriber for $350/year and receive detailed reports on current court cases threatening access, pertinent historical case citations, and other Alliance activities.

- Voting membership open to non-profit access operations for an annual contribution of $3,000.
- Non-voting memberships available to organizations and individuals at the following levels:
 - ➤ Alliance Associate, $2500 - copies of all briefs and reports.
 - ➤ Alliance Supporter, $500 - copies of all reports and enclosures.
 - ➤ Alliance Subscriber, $350 - copies of all reports.

Direct membership inquiries to Rob Brading, Multnomah Community Television, 26000 SE Stark St., Gresham, OR 97038, or phone 503/667-7636.

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Transforming Young Lives

Empowering Young People Through Hands-On Television

by Pam Sporn, Donna Golden, and Carol Roman

Educational Video Center (EVC) is a non-profit media center established in New York City to train young people to make video documentaries about social issues of their concern. Over the past ten years, EVC programs have grown to include the **High School Documentary Workshop, Youth Organizers Television (YO!TV),** a summer **Media Institute for Teachers, Community Organizers TV (CO-TV),** and a community screening series. The EVC collection of over 30 youth-produced documentaries are distributed nationally through our catalogue. We have recently published the ***YO!TV Handbook,*** a comic-book style production guide, intended for use by youth in community settings.



Photo courtesy EVC

An EVC Crew on location, March 1994.

In this article we describe how the process of making, screening, and viewing EVC videos is an empowering experience for the youth producers and the communities they share their work with. We will highlight the work of three programs: the Documentary Workshop, CO-TV, and the **Community Screening Series.**

EVC's High School Documentary Workshop. Every September and February, 25 high school students from all five boroughs of New York City begin the Documentary Workshop. The groups are diverse, but are predominantly African-American and Latino. Usually about half of the young people have had prior video experience. They spend 12 hours a week, working in one of two production teams to research, shoot, and edit their 20-25 minute long documentaries using 3/4" video equipment. In addition to the experience the young producers earn four high school credits.

Sharif Simpson was a 19-year-old senior at **Martin Luther King High School** in Manhattan when he participated in the EVC Documentary Workshop's production of ***Rap It Up!,*** an EVC documentary about hip-hop music and culture. He had this to say about what he gained from the process:

"I learned that teamwork, brain creativity, and expressing opinions are very important in making a video. I also learned to work under hard conditions. I was cameraman when we shot an interview in Brooklyn with a new female rapper named 'Red.' It was raining and I had to constantly walk backwards while shooting. But I managed to make the shots very beautiful. Another thing I really liked was being able to manipulate and control images. Combining pictures from movies, magazines, and music videos was great."

In the Documentary Workshop we capitalize on two aspects of video production that can be empowering to someone involved in the process. One is that videos are made to be seen. The fact that EVC tapes are made for an audience implies that the makers of the tapes have something of value and importance to say. This is empowering to young people, who rarely are given space to express themselves. In addition to allowing a student voice to be heard, the fact that EVC producers are conscious of an audience challenges them to really inquire into their topic in order to coherently and forcefully present their point of view.

As Sharif said, teamwork is important in making a video. In the EVC Documentary Workshop we maximize the collaborative nature of production to ensure that all 12 members of the production team feel they are being represented and have ownership of the tape. Because we want to encourage individual participation and group interaction during the production process, a lot of attention is given to the structure of the workshop and the teaching methods used by EVC instructors.

One example is the way in which the documentary topics are chosen for the term. How do 25 teenagers, who have just met, come up with two meaningful project topics, and all feel they have had input in the process? This is an intensive, two-day process at EVC that begins with each student brainstorming and doing exploratory writing in their journals. The second day each student must draw from their writing to "pitch" an idea for a documentary to the whole group. After discussing everybody's ideas fully, and reaching consensus, or taking a vote, we have our two topics. By requiring every student to brainstorm, write, and defend an idea for a tape we are making the statement that each one has something important to say, and ensuring they have a chance to say it. It is a way to pro-actively deal with unequal power relations that exist in a diverse group of 25 people, even if they are teenagers. A shy 16-year-old girl has the same speaking time as a more confident 18-year-old boy. A student from a GED program in East Harlem has the same speaking time as a more middle class student, whose mother is a college-educated filmmaker. The same attention is given to making sure everyone in the team uses all of the video equipment, that both boys and girls do interviews and make phone calls, and are responsible for editing part of the tape.

Giving young people a forum for having their say is empowering to each individual. But learning to exchange ideas with others, in a constructive way, empowers the group to work as a community. A Colombian-born young man in the ***Rap It Up!*** production team, who at first was not very interested in hip-hop

See *Educational,* page 17...

"You Know You Owe"
Access Advocate Cliff Jernigan

by Uriel Grunfeld

Following is a conversation I had with Cliff Jernigan just the other day. I asked Cliff if he would agree to be "interviewed" by me, when we both knew that it was really just going to be a capsule version of many exciting and passionate conversations we have had over the past four years since we first met, here at the University Park campus of the Pennsylvania State University. This ongoing conversation has been one of great value and interest to myself, and I trust that some of that value and interest will "rub off" onto this, admittedly, watered-down version. – U.G.

URIEL: "Cliff, could you introduce yourself?"

CLIFF: "Well, part of what I do is to serve as an Associate Professor in the **College of Communication** at **Penn State University.** I teach courses in audio and video production that rely heavily on the concepts of media literacy. I also have 18 years in television news gathering and special assignments, first as a videographer and then as a producer."

URIEL: "Could you tell the readers where you're coming from?"

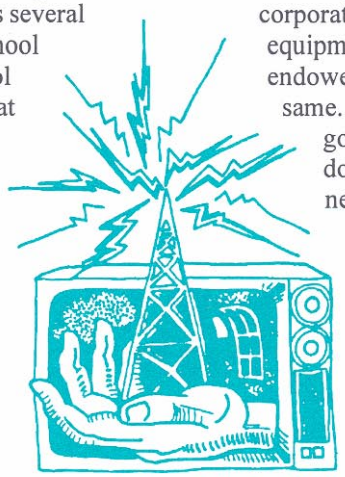
CLIFF: "My take on the media or media studies is that the electronic media is by far the most persuasive and pervasive influence in the world today and that that power needs to be harnessed."

URIEL: "Right. But where are you, specifically, coming from? I mean what's your angle? What's your constituency?"

CLIFF: "My 'folks' are in the inner city. These folks will never be served by the academy or by corporate interests. It's only grassroots efforts that will work here. It's only through the community that the media monster might be harnessed. What I mean is that the academy is focused on research, to a large extent, and on producing programs - and people - that have, let's say, a certain stake in maintaining the status quo. They might not see it that way, but what 'outreach' program, from the academy to the community, have you seen? Corporate media are interested in the money, and they use the media to play on emotions - for the dollar. So who serves the community? The community better serves the community. It's all about grassroots here."

URIEL: "OK. So that's where you're coming from. Where are you headed?"

CLIFF: "I'm interested in putting in place programs that use the media to increase learning in every area. The folks that use and are influenced most by the media are inner city young adults, and to me it makes sense that these folks learn how to use the forces that are so often used against them. What I'd like to see is several programs, perhaps after-school programs, perhaps in-school programs, perhaps both, that show students and parents how to use the various media (television or video production, audio or radio production, computer skills) to tell their own stories in their own voice. As important, is the use of the media to engage in learning across the board, in every subject area, in all facets of learning. This means using the video medium to encourage kids to engage in learning math skills, for example, while their mothers could be involved in a group situation where consumer topics are being addressed. Did you know... I mean I heard that 40% of black high school students have access to computers, while over 90% of white students have such access. What does this say? Where are we headed if this is true? The community has to know this and then act on it."



by Sooz Palsa for **CMR**

URIEL: "I like the idea of using the forces that are normally used against you to your own advantage. It's like a martial arts principle. When you say 'community' though, who are you specifically referring to? I know you have a deep mistrust of labels, but there is no denying that 'inner city' is most often used as a code for minorities. The racist component cannot be overlooked, as the statistic you mentioned points out so vividly. Question is, if social prejudice and inequality impact the distribution of media resources, where do you suggest we start in order to redress the balance?"

CLIFF: "Look, you have a lot here, let me try it like this... When I say 'community,' I am referring to the black inner-city communities, located in America's large cities. While it's true that racism cannot be overlooked, it can no longer be a reason for inaction. It is almost at the point where I'll beg, borrow or steal the equipment needed to get started. What I'm saying is that if I concentrate on the underlying problems I lose energy on getting things done. I'll go from corporation to corporation asking for their used equipment, I'll go to the well-endowed schools asking for the same. If I don't get it from them, I'll go to the manufacturers, if they don't provide the stuff necessary, I'll go to the friends I have and ask them to 'loan' me the gear to get started. I'll ask the best educators to donate their time... I'll make the case that it's in their best interest to do this... I'll make the case. I don't have time to explore the 'root causes' - I'll leave that to the sociologists. I have work to do and very little time in which to do this, you know what I mean?"

URIEL: "The sense of urgency you convey is compelling. But I think to myself, what if folks reading this will say, 'yeah, these are good *intentions,* but it's all in future tense.' What type of projects are there in the works that you know of that meet the same agenda? Are there any such?"

CLIFF: "The fact that we're having this conversation is an indication that there are too few. But there are signs of hope, I personally know of some projects in Philadelphia, in Pittsburgh, some in Canada and programs in New York. But the key questions are: Do they work? Are they funded? Are they dismissed as 'feel good' projects to keep kids occupied, or 'busy?' Like I said, this conversation indicates, not that programs abound, rather it indicates the lack of such programs. If they were out there in huge numbers, we would hear about them, people would talk of this 'new approach' to learning. But there is very little talk because there are so few programs. That's the point. My future or my timeline for the future is what most people would call very immediate. I'm not talking

See *Cliff Jernigan,* page 19...

Hawai`i Holocaust Project

Preserving Oral History Through Public Access

by Judy M. Weightman

Borys died last night. **Borys Kusne** was one of our early interviewees of the **Hawai`i Holocaust Project.** A man of courage, a philosopher and an articulate Holocaust survivor, Borys shared his story with us and the Hawai`i community. Like so many of our interviewees, he had become a part of our lives, as we had become a part of his.

Borys was born in Vilna, Lithuania in 1918. When the Nazis invaded and captured Lithuania in 1941, Borys and his family, along with many other thousands of Jews, were forced into the Vilna ghetto. When the ghetto was liquidated in 1943, Borys, his father and brother were separated from the women in the family and never saw them again. Borys's father was killed by the Nazis when they were taken to Estonia. Borys and his brother were held in a number of concentration camps including **Buchenwald, Magdeburg** and **Sachsenhausen.** Borys vividly shared his concentration camp experiences.

"We were like stone, you know, you get in time when you want to die. There is a line between life and death. It was in concentration camp and ghetto, when the line stopped, when it is no more, you're a free man, you can take chances. You're not afraid – not to die – you want to die.... Now I believe in fate, when you have to survive, you survive; I don't know how it is. And they took us for three days without food, without water. They gave us a pound and a half some bread in the beginning, and no water. People died. We came there; it was in the wilderness, in Estonia near Finland where no people were living. Again a camp, another camp. In the morning we had to go out to work. It was in January and December. We had no clothes. Nothing. We were making an oven, we were calling it, about fifty people were staying together and holding each other to make heat. It was worse than imagination. From there, when the front got a little closer, they took us to another place. We marched all night. The ocean was right there, the Baltic, and people who couldn't keep up were pushed into the ocean.... You people, I hope you will never know, don't know, the worst thing is not hunger. Hunger is something you get used to – it is pain. People gave up. Musulman, they call them. They gave up. They walked around like ghosts and they died. A musulman was a dead man."

Borys was liberated in 1945 and came to the United States in 1949 and to Hawai`i in 1976. His brother also survived and now lives in Israel.



Photo courtesy Hawai`i Holocaust Project

"The Hawai`i Holocaust Project was founded to document the life experiences, and particularly the World War II experiences, of three groups in our Hawai`i community..."

The Hawai`i Holocaust Project was founded to document the life experiences, and particularly the World War II experiences, of three groups in our Hawai`i community: Holocaust survivors who live in Hawai`i; other members of the Jewish community in the islands who fled Europe before or during the war; and the men of the **522nd Field Artillery Battalion** – a *Nisei* (second generation Japanese-American) unit, a part of the famous **Nisei 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team.**

Like the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the men of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion were sent to fight in the European theater in Italy and France. During the last months of the war, however, the 522nd was detached from the 100th/442nd and was temporarily attached to the **Seventh Army** and sent to Germany. There, in the last tumultuous days of the war, the 522nd provided supporting fire for seven different army divisions. Events moved so quickly during that time that the Nisei artillerymen sometimes found themselves ahead of the infantry as they pushed further and further into Germany. There, in the spring of 1945, these young Japanese-American men, some of whom had families forcibly evacuated to internment camps in the United States, came upon the striped-clothed concentration camp survivors of **Dachau** and its many subsidiary camps.

The genesis of The Hawai`i Holocaust Project and our documentary was in 1984 at an early morning **Jewish Federation** breakfast at the Tahitian Lanai during a talk by **Dr. Yehuda Bauer,** the eminent **Hebrew University** Holocaust scholar. Dr. Bauer spoke of the need to preserve the testimonies of both survivors and liberators. I casually mentioned that here in Hawai`i we have a very special story, a story of non-Jewish Japanese American men who attend ***Yom Ha'Shoah***[1] services each year because of their experiences at Dachau as very young men. For three years we tried to do just that. During a part of that time, I was a Public Defender for the State of Hawai`i, then a staff attorney for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. My colleague, **Linda Menton,** an assistant professor of education at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa and I, by then an assistant professor of law, tried to get others to do what we believed to be a very important project. Finally, we decided that regardless of the lack of money, regardless of the lack of experience, we were just going

See *Hawai`i,* page 30...

Empowerment

Access Visions and Producer Realities[1]

by John Higgins

"Even if you aren't consciously changing things by their participation, they [public access producers] change the world. Just by their choosing to put messages on the air, and that message going out, people are going to change things...it's like throwing a pebble in the pond. Every story is a pebble – and you can't even judge where those waves go. Simply the fact that those stories were told – and without access TV they would not have been – the world's been changed by what's been said..."

–"Paul," ACTV Producer

This article continues a discussion related to the "visions" of public access I began in the August 1991 and May/June 1993 issues of the ***Community Television Review***[2]. The 1991 piece examined the ways in which visual representation is related to the politics of culture and power, and training methods which might work against the creation of "broadcast clones."



by Sooz Palsa for **CMR**

The 1993 piece described the start of a study that focused on one of the claims made by public access proponents: that video training helps citizens empower themselves. This study has been completed recently; this article will present an overview of the research findings.[3]

It is important to note that in the 25 years of access practice, this is the first study to actually test the implementation of the public access vision of empowerment as it relates to the experiences of the community producer. As such, it provides empirical data regarding the impact of access to what until now have been theories supported primarily by anecdotal evidence.

The study focused on how the empowerment vision fared when put into practice at the local level, as seen through the experiences of the community volunteer producer. In particular, I was interested in the access belief that training and participation in video production led to media literacy and media demystification — which lead to personal and social empowerment.

Review of the study. The 1993 article outlined early philosophical and methodological approaches to the study, as well as critiques of access's empowerment vision.[4] Empowerment was defined as a new awareness of one's self, of others, and of society, and the power relationships involved within each sphere as they intersect. Higher levels of empowerment moved beyond mere recognition to attempts to act upon these new awarenesses, including active attempts to change power relationships on each of these levels. The highest level of empowerment was determined to be attempts to change power relationships on the societal level, in accordance with the works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire.[5]

Empowerment within a production context included an awareness of (and, at a higher level, implementation of) the traditional canon of media production (technical, symbolic and cultural/ideological); media organization; and non-media institutional relationships.[6] These were identified within media education as constituent elements of "media literacy" and "media demystification."

Definition of the ingredients of empowerment, media literacy, and media demystification helped point to a line of questioning to be followed when talking with community producers. I felt the study called for an interpretive research methodology that reflected public access's attitudes toward self-growth and change, and technology as a means to empowerment rather than an end in itself. Dervin's Sense-Making methodology fit the bill, and directed the data collection using in-depth, open-ended, structured focus group and individual interviews.[7]

Over a 9 month period in 1993 and 1994, I spoke at length with 28 volunteer community producers at **ACTV 21** in Columbus, Ohio.[8] The interviews were analyzed using deductive and inductive approaches;[9] the findings were then compared to the theories, ideas, and beliefs of writers and access practitioners of the past 25 years.

Some of the major findings are listed below.[10] It is my intent that this article serve mainly to summarize the study results. Further discussion of the implications of these findings will then take place in upcoming issues of ***CMR***.

Media Literacy. The major finding of this study is that media literacy – the "reading" and/or "writing" of media programs – is a learning outcome for all the community producers in this investigation. Media demystification – the awareness and/or utilization of media structure and influence – is an outcome for many, but not all.

Media literacy involves shattering the apparently "seamless" nature of mainstream television. As a result of their access experience, producers exhibit the ability to evaluate program content, intent, technical elements, and the symbolic meanings found within television programs; they also are able to utilize many of these elements regularly in the program-production process.

The findings leave little doubt that, for the producers in this study, public access participation leads to the ability to deconstruct the "reality" of television. The data further indicate that these media literacy skills have value in promoting analytic and critical thinking skills.

Dealing with divisions. Producers have developed their own methods of dealing with what can be deep ideological and personal divisions within the access facility. Personal divisions are more likely than ideological divisions to cause producers to drop out of access participation. Ideological differences are offered sanctuary by First Amendment dogma.

Notions of freedom of speech. Producers overwhelmingly conceptualize freedom of speech as an individual right rather than

See *Higgins*, page 22...

Labor and Access

A Roundtable Discussion

fyi

For further information on some of the programs mentioned in the article and on labor programming in general, contact:
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c/o Fred Carroll
P.O.Box 1750
Santa Monica, CA
90406-1750
Tel: (310) 395-9977

For further information on *Labor Beat*, contact:
Labor Beat
37 S. Ashland
Chicago, IL 60607
Tel: (312) 226-3330
email:
lduncan@igc.apc.org

For information about labor video in Mexico, email:
leopoldo@mundo.eco.utexas.edu

Following are some excerpts from a roundtable discussion (which was in fact a telephone conference call), which took place in late April, and which addressed the topic of public access and labor issues. Participating in the discussion were ***Sally Alvarez, Larry Duncan,*** *and* ***George Stoney.*** *Also attending were* ***Uriel Grunfeld*** *and* ***Bob Devine,*** *the editors of this issue of the* **CMR.** *After a couple of minutes of chitchat, the conversation kicked off with Sally explaining her research project.*

SALLY: "Well, my doctoral dissertation has been in process for a couple of years, and it is a study of as many of the people as I could locate and get to cooperate, who have been involved in public access cable programming for the labor movement. One of the distinctions that the study has made is that some folks have really done their access programming from sort of a rank-and-file, independent perspective, and then there have been other folks who have participated in access more from a formal standpoint of doing programming to represent the positions of their own unions, and then there are some people who are caught in between. It goes all the way from **Frank Morrow** down in Austin, who is very independent, who is not at all connected with the formal labor movement, but does a lot of programming which has to do with working people, working conditions and economic conditions. It goes all the way up to folks who are producing officially, as spokespeople of their labor unions. For instance, **Jerry Payne** in Indiana produces a program called ***Voice of the People*** that is really a program out of the state **AFL-CIO** in Indiana."



by Sooz Palsa for **CMR**

LARRY: "Sally, since you probably have the best up-to-date overview – how many labor TV shows are on public access around the country now?"

SALLY: "It is hard to get a picture that will hold true for any longer than about two weeks. When I first started working on this I interviewed **Cathy Garmezy** at the **Labor Institute of Public Affairs** in Washington D.C., which is the public relations arm of the AFL-CIO. She probably has some of the most recent up-to-date information about who is officially connected with labor unions and producing. But she herself really didn't know, because everything is very informal. That's one of the things I did find, that there is really not as much networking as there needs to be between people who are doing this kind of work. I would estimate that there are between 40 to 50 active producers. But there are probably another 30 or 40 who have either produced within the last ten years or who produced on a sort of ad hoc, single episode basis, who don't do regular series. I successfully contacted 35 producers, and by successfully contacted that means I either interviewed them on the phone or I got some response from them. But there were at least another 10 to 15 that I know about that I have not been able to get a response from, and I know there are some out there that I don't even know about."

LARRY: "Sally, I don't remember in your chapter that you sent me whether you mentioned **Union Producers and Programmers Network,** which is an organization that has been going on for the last five or six years."

SALLY: "Oh, yeah, I do want to mention that..."

LARRY: "UPPNET is independent of the AFL-CIO. It includes more rank-and-file oriented type producers, in the category ***Labor Beat*** is in, but it also includes the more official regional, or municipal federations of labor, union locals, professional independent producers and so on. UPPNET isn't directly an appendage of the AFL-CIO or the Labor Institute of Public Affairs, although it has in its constitution that independent producers or public access producers should seek affiliation. ***Labor Beat,*** for example, is a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the **IBW Local 1220** here. Another element, nationally, would be the **Labor Tent** conferences. The most recent one was in Minneapolis-St. Paul. UPPNET was a sponsor of the last one, but also the **Minnesota Federation of Labor** and Labor Institute of Public Affairs sent representatives there. So that goes beyond UPPNET. Now there is an international component to the Labor Tent conferences and I believe there are plans to have the next one in St. Petersburg, Russia....

"...Networking is occurring and we are all

See *Labor Roundtable,* page 25...

Public Policy Report

Continued from page 6...
original appeal states the government involvement listed above, and states that government can expect nothing but censorship from cable operators after removing the statutory liability exemption for access channels.

Why censorship fails. The list of potential censors may be long; the list of those wanting to be censored is much shorter. The United States was founded on the principle that people can best represent their own interests, and therefore can speak for themselves. Through our legal system we have identified certain activities and expression considered too dangerous to allow; obscenity and libel fall within this category. We have also identified the court system as the neutral way to judge expression. The legal system has worked for 200 years.

What we can expect if this Court ruling stands. Soon after the FCC rules were issued, the **Tucson Community Cable Corporation** was notified by the cable operator that tapes had to shipped out of state for review and that live programming was to stop. Fortunately, the Alliance for Community Media had already secured a stay of implementation, which nullified this communication.

In a footnote, the majority stated that it expresses "no view on whether provisions of the 1984 and 1992 Cable acts ... permitting franchising authorities to force operators to set aside PEG access channels infringe upon the First Amendment rights of cable operators or programmers." This issue has been presented in **Time-Warner**'s appeal of a lower court decision upholding PEG access as constitutional.

The Court's dissenting opinions. Judge Patricia Wald, a member of the original three-judge panel which blocked the censorship rules, cited the problem faced by cable operators. Although censorship is theoretically optional, operators must ban certain programs or face possible criminal prosecution.

Judge Harry Edwards, another member of the original panel, questioned the amount of attention to such a small amount of programming and the failure to address violence on television generally. Edwards stated, "it is hard to restrain from comment when one is asked to spend too much time on something of so little consequence in terms of its overall effect on society. ...From my vantage point, Congress seems to have sent the FCC on a fool's errand."

> **"The list of potential censors may be long; the list of those wanting to be censored is much shorter."**

Don't count on competition to provide a forum. A current buzz phrase is to depend on competition to provide the needs of society. Let's be fair about the results of competition. Better automobiles, cheaper computers, more consumer items – yes, competition can take some credit. But competition has never supplied public interest needs. Just look at civil rights, public parks and equal opportunity.

And where can you find effective, meaningful competition in telecommunications? Where? How many local phone companies do you have? How many cable companies? What is the real difference between AT&T and MCI? (They even spend comparable amounts of rate payer money to trash each other on TV, and then team up to affect legislation in their favor.)

While the "competition"-speak is having its big run in Washington and in the commercial media, it is important to remember that we see little evidence of competition today. Why should we believe there will be real competition in the future?

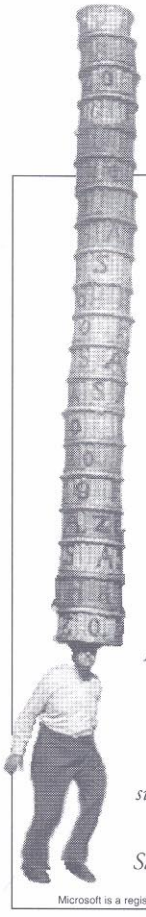
The small price to pay. The Alliance seeks access to telecommunications for community groups and individuals served by Alliance members as fair compensation for use of public space on the ground and in the air. We seek this compensation from a tremendously profitable industry which has been identified as the #1 growth industry in the United States.

"Don't mourn, organize!" The Alliance is working to assist members in organizing constituents. You can help!

1. Work with your regional public policy chair to encourage members to work with constituents. Let's top last year's 10,000 contacts.
2. Join the **Public Policy Council,** and encourage others to do so. We need to keep **Jeff Hops** working with the Alliance. Public policy issues are core to the Alliance's mission, and given the domination of telecommunications corporate giants, are not short term.

"Don't mourn, organize!" are the words of a labor organizer of the 1930's. A primary task of the Alliance is to assist members in assuming the same phrase.

Alan Bushong is Executive Director of Capital Community Television in Salem, Oregon, and serves as the Chairperson of the Alliance's Public Policy Committee.



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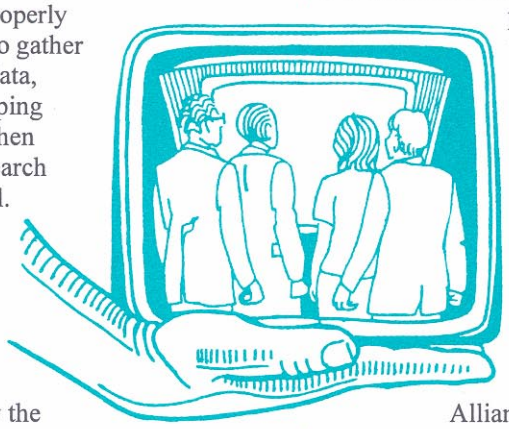
Making a Difference...

Continued from page 4...

would support the overall mission of the Alliance. Those mega-strategies are: (1) framing the debate; (2) pursuing a supportive legal and regulatory environment; (3) building coalitions; and (4) supporting local organizing.

Since the Committee will be asking for more member involvement in this process, I thought I'd start the discussion by offering my own ideas on the tactics and activities suggested by these mega-strategies:

Framing the Debate. In order to properly "frame the debate," I believe we need to gather information and opinion, analyze this data, involve various constituents in developing positions based on this analysis, and then disseminate our positions. Primary research projects would start at the national level. The coordination of the research would be assisted by regional and local activities. Responses to the research would take place at the local level. Compilation would then take place at the national level. Policy development would be coordinated by the National Office at national, regional and state level forums. Synthesis and endorsement of positions and policies would take place at the national level. Media relations would be provided at the national level. The National Office would also provide support materials to assist the cultivation of media at the local level. The policies, positions, and activities of the Alliance would be promoted to the media at the national and local levels. Public Relations efforts would promote the policies, positions, and activities of the Alliance through national and local advertising and marketing efforts.



Pursuing a Supportive Legal and Regulatory Environment. The Alliance's public policy efforts must span the three branches of government and extend from national to local efforts. **Executive/Administrative Branch,** at the national level, includes the offices of the President and Vice President, as well as those agencies overseen by the Executive Branch, such as the **Federal Communications Commission** and **U.S. Department of Commerce.** At the State level, the Alliance must focus on the various state governors and their agencies which deal with telecommunications issues, such as **public utilities commissions (PUC's).** At the local level, the Alliance needs to support efforts targeting Mayors (or equivalents) and their commissions or appropriate departments. **The Legislative Branch** at the national level includes the appropriate Subcommittees and Committees of both chambers of the **U.S. Congress,** as well as the various staff members and counsels. At the State level, the Alliance must focus on the various state houses and their committees. At the local level, the Alliance needs to support efforts targeting the councils, boards of supervisors, or their equivalent. **The Judicial Branch** at the national level includes the **Federal Courts** and **Supreme Court.** At the State level, the Alliance must focus on the district courts. At the local level, the Alliance needs to support efforts targeting local judges.

Building Coalitions. As appropriate, the Alliance should build coalitions at the international, national, regional and local levels with: (1) similar technical or telecommunications non-profit organizations; (2) non-profit organizations which depend on or use electronic media; and (3) commercial providers of technical and/or telecommunications services.

Supporting Local Organizing. The Alliance's mission does not involve directly connecting people to electronic media – but supporting those individuals and organizations which do provide that connection. **"How-to" Information** could be developed and updated through informational packets and publications which will assist in establishing and improving local efforts to connect people with electronic media. Although this would be coordinated at the national level, information gathering would happen at the local level. **Current News** is necessary to stay on top of important current events and public policy issues. The Alliance should gather and disseminate information at the National and regional/state levels, both via print and electronic communication methods. Training sessions and networking meetings would be facilitated in order to encourage training for local organizing, networking, and dissemination of information. At national level, the Alliance should support at least one annual gathering, several regional/state-wide gatherings, and local events of shorter duration (such as networking lunches, public speaking engagements, on-site technical assistance, workshops, etc.) Networking would be encouraged for individuals with similar situations and problems in order to share their experiences and assist others. The Alliance should therefore coordinate specialized directories and **"special interest groups" (SIGs)** based on specific criteria, both at the national and regional/state levels. Showcasing activities such as competitions, festivals, and awards are significant incentives for showcasing the best efforts in local organizing. The Alliance should continue to manage the Hometown Video Festival and communication center awards at the national level, continue to coordinate regional/statewide festivals, and explore other ways of recognizing local organizing excellence. Distribution of community media examples of excellence is an important element of promoting "everyone's access to electronic media." The Alliance should be more aggressive in exploring distribution methods at the national level (such as direct broadcast satellite and the Internet); at the regional/state level (such as state university networks, regional Bell VDT systems, etc.); and at the local level (such as cable TV and low power TV).

Making a Difference in the National Community. As I've mentioned, these pages of ***CMR*** show ways that community media centers and producers have made a difference in our local communities. Such expertise, energy, and commitment at the local level can also be used to great effect at the national level. So even if you are "only" a volunteer producer, a local board member, an overworked staff member, a media instructor, or a cable regulator, I urge you to get more involved with the Alliance. With your help, we can improve upon the "hallmarks of success" for the Alliance and create effective ways to advance our mega-strategies. And together, we can truly make a difference in our national community.

Barry Forbes is Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Media.

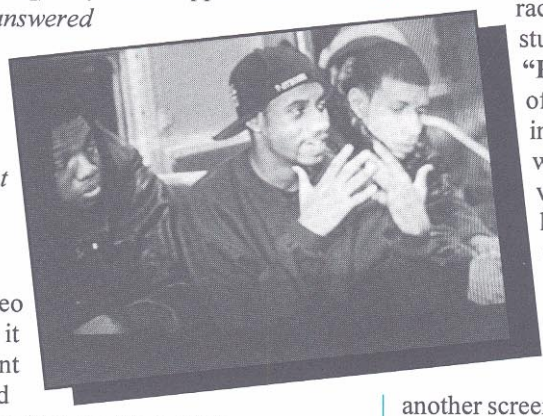
Illustration by Sooz Palsa for **CMR**

Educational Video Center...

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music, had the following to say about the discussions in his group:

"At EVC students exchanged opinions and really helped each other. Making a video about how young people feel about the trends and styles of hip-hop was very interesting because we had lots of debates. We argued about what was right and wrong with hardcore. For example, my friend 'Red' (she was also working with me on the subject) kept asking Tony (known as T-Strong) why male rappers call women b_t_h or "hoe." He answered by saying that it is not necessarily how it sounds. What I like about our video is that we really show how young people disagree about what's wrong and what's right."



What impact does collaboratively producing a video have on a young person? Does it change him/her in any significant way? **Adisha** was an 18-year-old high-school senior when she worked on ***State of Emergency*** (1995), a tape which explores the devastating effect current New York City budget cuts will have on education and youth programs. When asked at the premiere screening what she hoped the tape would accomplish, she said:

"I think that this tape will help to inform people about this situation. Before I came to EVC I couldn't have given a darn. After you start hearing the facts you start to become aware of how it personally affects you and then you want to do something about it. If we can get one person to want to do something I feel we will have made a difference."

Community Screening Series. Media analysis (reading) and media production (writing) are generally considered to be the fundamentals of media literacy. But in addition to being able to understand the messages in media products and produce these products oneself, one must also consider the importance of being able to disseminate that which one has created. Writing (producing) serves the purpose of expressing one's views and opinions. The next logical step in expressing one's thoughts is being able tc share them with others. Although the documentary videos produced by EVC students usually mark the first time they have done any video production, these tapes are still meant to be viewed by and shared with an audience. Fostering dialogue between producers and community members is an important part of the production experience here at EVC. It is with this in mind that EVC's Community Screening Series was developed. Showcasing youth-produced videos, providing forums to discuss issues, sharing information and resources on video production, and educating audiences about community media were among the many goals and expectations of the screening series.

Screenings were set up at a number of youth groups and programs around the city including **The Leadership Organization for Teenagers, CityKids,** and **Jamaica Arts Center.** Through screenings, students were able to get critiques of their work. Some tapes also served as springboards for other discussions altogether and helped create an atmosphere for youth producers and their peers to talk freely with each other.

One screening in particular exemplified the best of what the screening series tried to accomplish. It was in Philadelphia, at the **White Dog Cafe.** The screening room was packed (about 40 people) with a mostly youth audience. Most were there as part of an organization: a communications school, a video group, and a youth leadership group. After viewing ***Rap It Up!,*** the student producers and the audience began a spirited exchange on hip-hop's influence on young people which led to a discussion on racism and student relations in their schools. The two student producers who accompanied me, **Adeline "Red" Johnson** and **Ronald Locklear,** did the majority of the interacting with the audience. After the screening was over, many students wanted to know when we were coming back to Philadelphia to show more videos. Red enjoyed the screenings because of the lively interaction with the audience. She says "a lot of teenagers just want to be heard... screenings make teenagers conversate more, broadens their mind and helps them to express how they feel inside... It makes me happy to see people conversating."

This level of audience interest was evident at another screening at **Union Settlement** (a community center in **Washington Houses** projects at 98th and 3rd Avenue) where we also showed ***Rap It Up!*** We had been warned that there would probably be a low attendance so when we got there we spent a few minutes going around the center and rounding up whoever was there. After the tape had ended, the audience seemed pretty unwilling to open up until Red stepped up and declared she knew folks had something to say so they had better just speak up and say it. Red's challenge to the audience broke the ice and at that point she and the 15-20 young people present began a lengthy and heated debate on sexism and censorship in hip-hop. Red's dynamic presence helped the young people there to open up and speak freely and passionately about their concerns.

Ron felt that the screenings were important because "we got more feedback and emotion towards our tape... it seemed like everybody wanted to make a tape after seeing ours... It showed us that we just didn't make the tape for nothing...I think there should be more screenings of the tapes because they have a powerful impact on people's lives."

Another major goal of the screening series was to educate audiences about community media. There is very little awareness of alternative media among the general public, so an audience may not necessarily know how to receive the work, given the many preconceived ideas about what video is or is supposed to be. Part of having a successful screening involves understanding the needs of the organization where the tape is being screened. Are they just interested in viewing tapes for content? Are they even interested in alternative media at all? Many places where EVC screened tapes did not immediately understand the significance of community-produced video. It's important to find out exactly what an organization does, why they are interested in a screening, and how or whether the work of the media organization can fit in – this means becoming sensitive to the organization's needs and figuring out how to work within their structures and programs.

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and practices might have to do with the extent to which they engage participants with and in the local community context.

Public access struggles to make the means of electronic communication accessible to the broadest possible range of voices and expressions by providing the tools, the training, the channel space and the facilitation support necessary to allow citizens to communicate effectively.

At various times and with various constituencies, the requirements of language, literacy, physical impairment, time commitments or cost can limit or prohibit access, and at such times access centers usually strive to reduce, bridge or eliminate those impediments to public access. In order to be as inclusive (and diverse) as possible, efforts are made to lower the thresholds that might discourage or prevent entry into the communication systems of the community.

Video is an interesting and accessible medium in a number of ways. At the most simple of operational levels, it is relatively easy to learn to "write" messages with the medium. The requirements of training and expertise are quite low. If we look at the access training programs around the country, we find that a person can be trained in basic proficiencies in from 4 to 12 hours, does not need prior expertise and does not need to be print-literate or have particular language skills. In overcoming the barriers of traditional literacy, the video medium can put participants on the same plane of "instant literacy" (White and Patel, p. 365) in a way that can "...transform relationships, support a high level of participation and have great impact among people who cannot read or write." (White and Patel, p. 366)

"...those of us who have worked in access frequently see groups developing cohesion, initiative and a sense of self-reliance..."

Further, basic video makers do not need any sort of code-fluency with electronic media or systems of visual representation. (Of course the refinement of "writing" skills toward "professionalism," and the development of critical "reading" skills involved in media literacy require a much more sustained effort than basic proficiency training.) The video medium attaches easily to oral cultural traditions (talking, telling stories, recounting oral history, debating, etc.), involves face-to-face interaction (in production, in live interactive programming, and in viewing), and when the production involves remote or field shoots, the medium connects with the social context and networks within which people experience their lives.

In contrast, those media tools which permit access to and participation in the electronic community of the infobahn have considerably higher thresholds. They require a moderate level of code fluency, and because keyboard systems are inevitably language-based, the threshold for use includes both language and literacy. The tools of computing, the internet, and information technologies are expensive enough that broad usage is not certain (while 70-80% of the population can access cable channels and/or video playback, the figures often quoted for computing and Internet capability are less than 30% of households), and in access settings, the tools are usually not "take out." The restrictions of cost, time and place, the necessity for training in code fluency, taxonomy and the architecture of use, and the requirement of literacy all contribute to a high threshold that limits broad popular use.

A second frame of reference for evaluating "alternative" access technologies, systems and practices might have to do with the degree to which the tools allow for broad entry into message construction, with a minimum of capital, technical expertise and operational training. Alternative media systems should be easily taught and provide a high level of productivity with low cost and little expertise.

Participatory and Democratic. The argument could be made that regardless of equity of access, most media are predominantly structured to disseminate the messages of one producer to many receivers, more so than they are structured to provide for participatory and interactive communications. Access to the technology of distribution does not diminish the distinction between producers and consumers of messages. In their article on the alternative press in South Africa, Tomaselli and Louw suggest that a democratic media system, "...entails a re-theorization that moves away from the conception... of the media as the source of information. Journalists should become 'facilitators' of social communication instead of the 'originators' of media messages." (Tomaselli & Louw, 1989, p. 213) White and Patel tout the democratic capacity of the video medium to encourage communication, "...person to person, group to group, village to village." (White and Patel, p. 365) Democratic media systems facilitate the engagement and active participation of broad representative groups and encourage and support lateral interaction (rather than vertical distribution) among the members of a group or community.

The production processes of public access often involve the collective activity of a number of persons, and so might be considered both social and participatory in the sense of leading to "common endeavors and actions." (Tomaselli, 1989, p. 12) These common endeavors are often across lines of difference, and those of us who have worked in access frequently see groups developing cohesion, initiative and a sense of self-reliance as an outcome of participation in access activities. In his research on public access and empowerment, **John Higgins'** findings provide strong support for the value of the interactive "process" dimension of public access work. (Higgins, 1995, in this issue of ***CMR***).

Many access centers encourage public screening of access programs (in the form of viewing parties, "premieres," fora for public discussion, etc.) in order to facilitate discussion of the programs, on a face-to-face basis, within the various social networks and among the various constituents implicated by the video. The roles of producer and audience are not discrete in an access community; any audience member can easily respond and/or become an originator of messages, and in this sense the model is a "many-to-many" system rather than the traditional "few-to-many" orientation of most commercial media. The model is one of "public communication" in which the focus shifts:

"...to an autonomous sphere of activity independent of the state, the popular production of messages, a public coming into being and voicing its own 'opinion' in opposition to state orchestrated voices; to the use of channels and

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Cliff Jernigan Interview...

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about something six or seven years down the road. What I'm saying is: let's start this now. There's a cat in Pittsburgh, **Spencer Simon,** and we've talked through the years. He works at a local television station in Pittsburgh. Well here's the deal, we've shared some thoughts and this cat takes the material and, working through his church, starts a program on how to watch television news, with an accent on what's missing. Now this is not some big time program, but it is action."

URIEL: "What I'm trying to get at is, where does the initiative come from, in your case, or in others, when there are so few role models? What sparks off, first an awareness that something is wrong, next a belief that something needs to be done and can be done, and finally a process of learning the tactical maneuvers that are necessary to get things done? Do you follow?"

CLIFF: "Part of the problem is the search for these 'role models.' My sense is that we need to impress upon the young adults that the role models are there but that the stories are not being told. Take for example the mother who works two jobs to keep her kids in clothes and books, where is her story being told? Well, we should tell it to our kids and let them know that there are other very legit stories that are 'seen' on a daily basis. I think this is what Simon was after when he taught about what stories are missing from the news. The spark comes from that gut feeling that you're being, in street vernacular, 'dissed' or disrespected. That your story is not worth telling. It's not a far leap from there, that your life does not mean as much, and when this hits, really sinks in, when you realize you bought the 'hype,' you will feel moved to action, to create or become the role model that doesn't exist, or show the young the models that do exist but are dismissed, 'dissed.'"

"Tactical maneuvers, man, are the big chess game. I mean, no one is gonna hand you power, and taking it won't work, not now anyway, so you negotiate for what you can get, you trade off the things you can to get to where it is you want to be. I'll teach or work somewhere to fund this; I have to believe that others will as well, if not then what are we doing here? We might as well have a beer and watch kids kill each other if we don't think we can make a difference. I'm not willing to do this, can't reach this point, won't work for me. Besides, for me, it's a sense of closure."

"Look, I was born and raised in Harlem, New York and the community there was very good to me, treated me special in many ways. When I was a kid there were a bunch of older cats and they started a photography studio. Well, this one guy, **Billy Crouch,** always said to me that 'no matter how book smart you become, it's a good idea to be able to work with your hands.' He gave me a Nikon. This is big stuff, an expensive camera, and they let me – *encouraged me* – to roam around the studio all the time. When I made the normal mistakes in learning to shoot and print still photographs, they would all give me big grief, but it was intended to force me to do better, to watch the small details that add up. It was a very rewarding kind of thing and has influenced, to this day, what it is I do as my life's work."

"So I owe the community that schooled me and a lot of brothers and sisters owe, and if they try to forget it, then I'm one of the cats that will say 'Hey you know you owe...'"

URIEL: "Now you're talking! This sense of urgency comes from somewhere. And it's clear to me that getting your respect is not just a trivial matter, an 'ego trip' but in fact is a question of survival in many ways. Any thoughts on this?"

CLIFF: "Of course it's survival, I agree completely. Look, we approach this age of media rich and media poor, where the currency is in knowledge and the transmission of knowledge and the folks in the inner city are media poor. It's starvation, lack of knowledge, lack of the means to compete, forced to exist in a media ghetto, while the larger community exists in media luxury. It is survival, the ability to tell and record the stories that are held true, the ability to learn from each other through the exchange of 'cultural secrets,' the ability to survive in more than one way, we face a starvation from a lack of knowledge, a starvation as real and painful as any."

"...folks here are pounded by images that don't reflect their lives, are offered dreams...that say 'hey be like Mike.' Well most kids can't be – *won't ever be* – like Mike."

URIEL: "But the inner city is just as exposed to the mainstream media. In fact the inner city is bombarded with images as much as any other sector of society. So in what sense do you mean that the inner city is media poor?"

CLIFF: "How many satellite dishes in the community? How many folks have the upper levels of cable, have cable at all? How many home computers in the average innner city household?"

"Besides that, folks here are pounded by images that don't reflect their lives, are offered dreams (by appealing to emotion) that say 'hey be like Mike.' Well most kids can't be – *won't ever be* – like Mike. Who makes those commercials that position a pair of sneakers as 'the absolute must have to be the best on your block?' and then claims no responsibility for the kids, trying to be the best, that go out and shoot another kid for the sin of having what they wanted. This is madness, and the media plays on this madness with no sense that maybe something is a bit off here. Television news, a particular peeve with me, does this same sort of 'image replay.'"

"There was an instance in Pittsburgh where every time there was a drug bust they would pull file footage and show the same footage while speaking in generic terms of another bust. Problem with that is the hand shown cutting up the cocaine was black. So we get this repeated image of this black hand cutting up cocaine every time there's a drug bust. I mean, what's being said here? What message is embedded in this replay, this image over and over again?"

"The inner city is media poor because they don't tell their own stories – there are some exceptions, for example **Spike Lee** comes to mind – in their own way. Certainly not on television. The deal is, that without the means of grassroots production the community has no access to media production. If the community were to rely on the academy and on corporate media for media access, it would forever be poor."

URIEL: "Any further comment?"

CLIFF: "Let's get started!"

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technologies that are readily accessible and available; and to messages that are in the main produced and distributed freely as opposed to private/corporate production for profit or control by state organizations" (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, 1994, p. 21)

A third frame of reference for evaluating "alternative" access technologies, systems and practices might have to do with the degree to which the communicant roles of sender/receiver are permeable and shifting, depending upon function, and in which diverse participants can initiate and direct interaction, set an agenda and interact with others in an open arena to form public opinion about issues and matters of concern to the community.

Appropriateness to the Context of Use. Media tools and practices are adapted by a variety of people to a variety of social and cultural contexts for a variety of communicative and expressive purposes. One of the challenges facing public access has been to adapt the practice of television production – traditionally a centralized, capital intensive and expertise-dependent activity – to the needs, interests, social and cultural patterns, networks, practices and relationships of those with no prior knowledge of or interest in the field. Outreach efforts are often aimed at taking the medium of video production to the community rather than bringing the community to the medium. Many access centers are located in and strongly identified with local neighborhoods and communities. Successful access attends to the social geography of communication in its host community and supports communication that is based on and relevant to the life experiences of those communicating.

In order for media tools to support diverse cultural expression, they must be able to extend and enhance the diverse cultural practices of those using them. Concerns for cultural integrity should be central to any alternative media practice. Tool use should be congruent with the everyday experience of those who are engaged in the process of representation, and should permit a high degree of integration of the practitioners into the milieu in which the media intervention is taking place. In contrast to commercial media in which the practitioner is often an outsider and the media practices often restructure the cultural and social landscape of those who are the objects of mediation, public access most often seeks tools and practices that are adaptable by the insider to the particular context of use.

A fourth frame of reference for evaluating "alternative" access technologies, systems and practices might involve an examination of the extent to which such tools can adapt flexibly to the social organizations of the users. Such tools would necessarily be capable of functioning non-disruptively with a wide range of unique and particularized communicative events without major intrusion upon or restructuring of such events. In addition, attention should be given to tools which allow users to move outside of hierarchies and institutions, to become self-initiating and self-defining, and productive in their own milieu.

Increased User Literacy. In a paper on access and activism, **David Sholle** qualifies the terms "independent production," "alternative media" and "media activism" as referring "...to media work that operates outside of the political and economic mainstream, challenges mainstream television's hierarchical structures and supports access to the means of communication." (Sholle, 1995, p. 3) He then goes on to identify, as examples of this type of media practice, video groups that, (a) produce progressive content, and (b) are able to reach wide audiences. Like so many who write about access and alternative media, the focus falls on the substance and content of the communication and on those who articulate that content on behalf of others. The model is "speaking for," rather than "speaking. " To speak requires "writing" literacy.

"...attention should be given to tools which allow users to...become self-initiating and self-defining, and productive in their own milieu."

I have argued elsewhere that alternative electronic literacy, particularly with regard to video and television, is one of the central accomplishments of public access:

"The ability to read and write critically correlates very strongly with agency, and experience with the sort of universe construction and counterfactual thinking that is involved in media literacy goes a long way toward breaking the cycle of fatalism and quiescence... Literacy also involves the ability to analyze, to research, to investigate and to become an information seeker, a characteristic that is absent in the quiescent; the access user's "literacy" extends to becoming a cosmopolite and informed citizen in their home community. The tasks involved in putting together an access program requires the development of the ability to generalize, to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions and to articulate them in a way appropriate for public engagement... With or without the actual video programs that result from access involvement, the participation of an access user can and should involve the development of a critical facility with the language of electronic communications, and a measure of agency in analyzing, formulating and articulating positions." (Devine, 1992, pp. 23-24).

The simple shift from being a consumer of messages to being a producer of messages, however, is not enough. Alternative media tools should provide the user with sufficient distance to perceive, reflect, analyze, deconstruct and express identity and position. In clarifying issues of power and communication with regard to women's radio, **Dorothy Kidd** has provided this clarification:

"Voice is not a simple question of providing 'access' to individuals or groups, but instead...to reinforce the collective play of women's voices as instruments to name and analyze the conditions of everyday life, and to organize against them." (Kidd, 1993, p. 23)

This idea of extending the concept of voice to the analysis of the conditions of everyday life is appropriate for almost any subordinate or subaltern group, and is perhaps the most change-oriented dimension of media literacy.

It is not too difficult to imagine extending the concept of voice beyond passive access. The visual nature of the video

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medium affords the opportunity for temporal, spatial, logical, aesthetic, relational, subjective and attitudinal analysis. Video makers are often provided with new perspectives on themselves, their communities and social networks, and the material circumstances of their lives. Playing back tapes of one's self, one's home, the neighborhood and documented interactions often provides a catalyst for insight, and **Clemencia Rodriguez** maintains that such "mediation " can serve as the foundation for "a whole and integral process of identity deconstruction" and critical analysis. (Rodriguez, 1994, pp. 154-155) The active use of the video medium to reflect upon material reality and to construct a story or discourse gives participants

> *"...the opportunity to witness their ability to transform experience, facts, places, people, feelings, and ways of thinking into a story. This process serves as a catalyst for reevaluating their ability to transform."* (Rodriguez, 1994, p. 159)

A fifth frame of reference for evaluating "alternative" access technologies, systems and practices might involve assessment of the degree to which the media tools enhance the capacity for critical literacy.

Other Characteristics and Frames of Reference. Other considerations and characteristics in brief which might provide a frame of reference for evaluating the alternative or progressive possibilities of media tool systems (though this list of notes is certainly not meant to be exhaustive) include:

Relying on Indigenous Knowledge. The degree to which the media tools allow participants to shape, mold and direct the processes of expression according to their own knowledge and ways of knowing, and the degree to which a production process, "...reinforces and strengthens their existing indigenous knowledge and incorporates this knowledge into the development process in a way that is culturally sound." (Protz, 1991, p. 33)

Nurturing Diversity. The degree to which the media tools engage a wide range of differences, allow a diversity of practice and expression, encourage interaction across lines of difference and strengthen natural diversities within and among groups in a community.

Leading to Agency. The degree to which the media tools allow participants to be self-determining with regard to goals, objectives, roles, relationships and methods, to become self-sufficient and autonomous, and to have outcomes in spite of social structure.

Sustainable. The degree to which the media tools build upon the interdependencies in participating groups and in the community, the degree to which the resultant practices and functions can become part of the everyday life of the people involved, and the degree to which those interdependencies can be sustained over time without the support/assistance/aid of resources outside of the community.

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Higgins on Empowerment

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a social good. In part, this reflects the traditional emphasis placed by the access movement on this interpretation of the First Amendment. Only recently has the movement as a whole begun to widely emphasize the quality of ideas for the public good over a mere quantity of ideas for personal expression.

Notions of the audience. Producers construct a notion of audience that is personal and active, rather than faceless and passive. Most producers consider their viewing audiences as they construct access programs, and producers believe that the viewing audience for access programs is underestimated. An interactive community exists among producers and the viewers of their programs.

Access as process. The findings of this study strongly support the notion that public is best evaluated from a "process" rather than a "product" orientation.[11] Access should not be judged simply by the completed programs it offers an audience. Instead, one of access's strongest attributes is its ability to cultivate a process by which producers move outward from themselves to include others, and the larger society — including government and other institutions and organizations.

"We are not professional people. We are engineers, housewives and everything else but we're trying to learn how to cope with our society..."

These findings are in sharp contrast to Nicholas Garnham's argument that "the great advantage of the 'process' defense of video from the point of view of its advocates is that it cannot be tested."[12] This study indicates quite the contrary: not only are the process-based aspects of the access experience testable, they permeate the findings of this project.

Access as a process addresses the criticisms that video training in the access context focuses on technology as a panacea for social ills. Instead, video training and participation is recognized as a means to an ends, rather than the objective itself.

Access, empowerment and societal change. Empowerment and societal change within the access context are also best discussed within the above framework of an ongoing process rather than an end product. Within this context, societal change involves a dynamic relationship between the individual and the collective society. A transformation on the personal level affects the collectivity.

This study finds that empowerment builds from the personal and extends outward to include others. As one's life is changed by a transformed sense of self, the lives of others around are touched as well. Society, comprised of groupings of individual "selves" and "others," is subtly changed as a result.

The findings argue against Paulo Freire's overemphasis on action in the societal realm as the highest level of empowerment. Producers are not changing society through direct, Freirean-defined action and reflection; however, they are involved in a more subtle form of societal change. In this model, the essence of social change includes a dynamic relationship between the individual and the collective.[13]

Conclusions. It is important to note that the results of this study may not be generalized to all access producers across the U.S. Given the methods used, the results are applicable only to the participating ACTV producers. However, the study does provide a foundation on which to compare other producer experiences with public access television.

These results probably come as no surprise to access participants. The significance of these findings is that, for the first time, these benefits of access participation have been documented by a rigorous study. As such, they have importance in the formulation of public policy and facility operations. These and other aspects of the study will be addressed in future ***CMR*** articles.

The findings of this study indicate that public access's impact on societal change is not as direct as some proponents argue. Participation in video production does not necessarily lead to increased social activism, or empowerment in the traditional Freirean sense. However, public access does provide a foundation which encourages individuals and groups to believe they can make a difference on the broader society, and to take actions to address structural inequities within the society.

"...There is a lot of people that come in there and they'll take the classes and they don't understand just what the television media is about. We're not out there doing the same as Channel 4 News. We are out there trying to present a thought or an idea most times. We are not professional people. We are engineers, housewives and everything else but we're trying to learn how to cope with our society as far as the media...to better understand it, to use it, to make — to have fun a lot of times. Produce a program that has some context that will give someone else the philosophy that you have. Hopefully it is a good show."

—"Daniel," ACTV Producer

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1. This article is an abbreviated version of a paper presented at the ACM conference in Boston, 1995: "Does Access Really Empower People?"
2. Higgins (1991a, 1993). The concepts in the 1991 CMR article are more fully elaborated in Higgins (1991b).
3. This research was part of a dissertation study for my doctoral program at Ohio State University (Higgins, 1994). The sources cited in this article are only a sample listing of references. I am grateful for the many contributions and insights provided by Brenda Dervin of the Department of Communication at Ohio State University, as well as professors Steve Acker and Thom McCain. This study is available for purchase from University Microfilms International (UMI); P.O. Box 1764; Ann Arbor, MI 48106. US: (800) 521-0600, ext. 3781. Canada: (800) 343-5299. Michigan, Alaska, and Hawaii: call collect (313) 761-4700. Check the bibliography for publication information.
4. A preliminary look at these critiques is discussed in the 1993 article. The primary critique of the public access vision is that the vision does not address the structural changes necessary to address societal inequities. I am basing this and other critiques primarily on Garnham (1990), Matellart and Piemme (1980), Slack (1984), and Williams (1974). Critics argue that public access represents a technological – and therefore superficial – solution to societal problems. It is further argued that such solutions rest upon pluralist assumptions regarding the nature of truth and structures by which truth will emerge, the dichotomy of the individual against society, and the nature of power. These arguments tie into discussions of the First Amendment, and criticize access as privileging the quantity of expression over the quality of ideas. For further discussion see Aufderheide (1992), Devine (1990), Good (1989), Lukes (1974), and Streeter (1990).
5. Freire is considered the leading spokesperson in the area of critical pedagogy (1989, writing in 1970); other authors include Giroux (1992), and McLaren (1989). "Pedagogy" refers to the manner in which people teach and people learn. It includes both the content and structure of the learning experience.
6. The definitions of empowerment within a production experience are drawn from the works of critical pedagogy and media education. This latter area includes authors such as Buckingham (1990), Masterman (1989), and Sholle and Denski (1994).
7. These are more fully discussed in the 1993 article. For further discussion, see Dervin (1989).
8. I am grateful for the assistance provided by the people (past and present) at ACTV 21, in particular Carl Kucharski, Laurie Cirivello, Suzanne Patzer, and the many community producers who helped me with this project.
9. Informants were selected through purposive maximum variation sampling techniques. Deductive analysis involved coding and analyzing responses in keeping with categories derived from the literature of access, critical pedagogy, and media education. Inductive analysis analyzed themes judged to be emerging from the data provided by the community producers; these themes were directed by the research questions. Analysis followed procedures for qualitative investigation as primarily discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Patton (1990), and Strauss and Corbin (1990).
10. Some of the findings not addressed in this article include: new awareness of self and others, the importance of the volunteer "credit" system, the desirability of greater participation by producers in the access management structure, the producer's notions of "community," survival as a motivating force in the access facility, and the economic empowerment possibilities available through access participation.
11. The process nature of public access has been argued by Robert Devine (1992b), and Fred Johnson (1994).
12. Garnham (1987), 67.
13. Note that a focus on personal transformation as part of social change is not a pluralist obsession on individualism, but a dialectical process of interaction between the individual and the collectivity.

If Access is your privilege, then this is your responsibility...

MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

(Please check all that apply)

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- ❑ Access Staff Member
- ❑ Access Board Member
- ❑ Community Producer
- ❑ Cable Regulatory Staff or Board Member
- ❑ Other

ORGANIZATIONAL

- ❑ Over $100,000 annual revenues $275
- ❑ $10,000 to $100,000 annual revenues $175
- ❑ Under $10,000 annual revenues $75

All organizational memberships expire on September 30th of each year. Join between April and September and pay half the annual rate.

INDIVIDUAL

Affiliated (available only if your organization is a member: includes paid staff, volunteer producers, board members or other unpaid individuals associated with a member organization)

- ❑ Staff $35
- ❑ Volunteer $25
- ❑ At-Large (includes professional or volunteer individuals who are not associated with a member organization)
- ❑ Advocate (volunteer) $30
- ❑ Professional (salaried) $75
- ❑ Patron $120
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❑ Nonprofit ❑ Educational institution ❑ Library
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TYPE OF FACILITY

❑ Public access ❑ Educational access ❑ Government access
❑ Local origination ❑ Leased access ❑ Other

DEMOGRAPHICS (individual members only)

This optional information will help us to better serve current and potential members.

❑ Black ❑ White ❑ Hispanic ❑ Asian or Pacific Islander
❑ NativeAmerican ❑ Other ❑ Female ❑ Male

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Netiquette!...

Continued from page 5

cyberjock needed to know. So, over the next few days he tutored me and, as a free public service, I will share with you what little I learned of the Byzantine and ever-evolving code known as *netiquette.*

First of all, **DON'T SHOUT!** I'm not sure why, but nobody seems to like messages typed exclusively in upper case letters. It may have something to do with the fact that it's hard to read on a computer screen, but it may also just be seen as sloppy writing. In fact, the overall rules of grammar and composition should be followed when writing. Netrons hate it when you misspell, write incomplete sentences, or punctuate poorly. It's taken as a sign of disrespect.

Next, make certain you have something to say - expecially when posting a message to a group. Nothing annoys a cybermeister more than "spam" (meaningless messages without flavor or content - which you'd know if you'd been studying your vocabulary words from the last issue of ***CMR***). And make certain that what you have to say is pertinent to the group. Even the most articulate message about fish is unlikely to be interesting to the fowl group, etc. Overall, keep in mind that even someone who only subscribes to a couple of newsgroups or listservs can get hundreds of messages a day. Don't clutter their "in-boxes." It's impolite.

Which brings me to the *subject line.* Your average chipjockey getting several hundred messages a day is going to have to rely on the subject line when making the first-cut of messages to delete without reading. So make your subject line count. "Question for the group" is fine, provided your question is one that will relate. "IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?" and other such questions are, well, frankly kind of pathetic and certainly annoying. By tagging them with "question for the group" you mislead people into thinking they should spend their time reading them. So make your subject line as specific as possible. You actually increase you chances of your message being read and someone responding.

And speaking of the audience, some tendernets seem to think they can increase their audience by crossposting to as many newsgroups as they can find. This is bad. Crosspost only to the newsgroups that will obviously be interested in your message. Not only does crossposting itself clutter up the net, but the problem is compounded when people respond, because their message frequently ends up going back to all the groups. As I'm sure you can see, this is a problem of logarithmic proportions.

Well, that about takes care of the violations contained in *my* one simple message. But, I found that there are other conventions to follow if one wishes to avoid being flamed, ignored, or otherwise disliked by one's fellow netsters. For instance, I'm told that it's bad form to get personal in a newsgroup. Certainly, it's unethical to repeat or re-post a private message from someone to a newsgroup without their permission. And quoting out of context or misrepresenting another's views to a group in order to settle a personal grudge or harass someone is, of course, entirely out of line. Most newsgroupies don't care to hear dirt about others and would prefer that messages be abou the topic and not personal at all.

Here's another thing that really makes a cybersurfer crazy—quoting back an entire message (sometimes several pages of text) and then tacking on some lame remark like "I agree." No true bytehead has time for that kind of thing. Quote only the pertinent passages of previous messages, using as few words as possible, and make sure that your response adds something to the discussion. I've also heard complaints about people whose signatures are as long as their messages (and no more interesting). I guess the bottom line here is that we all need to respect the cyberspace of others.

Finally, a convention that's still evolving has to do with the issue of unreturned messages. We all know that not returning phone calls is considered rude. Is it also rude not to respond to your e-mail? I've run into a variety of opinions on this one. Some people check their e-mail several times a day and fire off rapid responses to every group posting and personal message. They obviously don't have enough to do. Others (like me) remember to do it only when all the other fires are out and they're too tired to do much other than hit the "delete" key repeatedly. And there are also issues about how convenient it is for a person to get to a computer, how frequently they are able to log on (some on-line services are "busy" a lot) and what their skill and/or interest level is. As best as I can figure, there is a general agreement that you should respond to any message posted to you personally that requires a response. After that, additional correspondence is optional. It's not considered rude to ignore requests for information posted to a newsgroup or listserv.

Most assuredly, there are many more laws out on the

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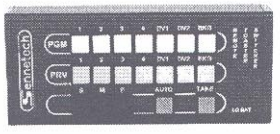
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Labor Roundtable...

Continued from page 14...

getting organized, even globally. But not along the ways we had anticipated, not along the preconceived formal grid of how we thought organizing would take place. Organizing is occurring much more organically, developing out of the actual struggles. For example, in the Midwest, in an informal way, some of you may be aware that there is a major labor movement going on in Decatur, Illinois. We have three unions there, **UAW** against **Caterpillar, United Rubber Workers** against **Bridgestone-Firestone,** and the **UPIU** against the **Staley** company which locked them out. And that's not only in Decatur, but there is the Caterpillar strike in Peoria and the **United Mine Workers of America** in Southern Illinois. So, the union movement refers to it as the "war zone." Coming out of that now, we have labor video being used directly in association with the needs of that struggle to get the message out. The Staley workers have used a number of videos. It's too bad that **Rose Feurer** from Labor Vision in St. Louis isn't here. They produced a video called ***Struggle in the Heartland*** which covers the pepper-macing of peaceful workers sitting in front of the plant gate. Over a thousand copies of that have been made and distributed around the country. It has become integral in developing solidarity. Then, in Peoria, you have the UAW local there, the Caterpillar workers, who taught themselves how to do this. You know, the classic public access model, as George would probably like to see. They have been producing a regular show called ***Mountain Climber*** about their struggle. They crank out a show a month, I think, and this has been going on for well over a year now. And they get it out around the country. And ***Mountain Climber*** popped up out of nowhere, actually. Outside of UPPNET and outside the Labor Institute for Public Affairs."

SALLY: "Let me interject something here, Larry, which I think is an important aspect that relates back to this whole question of networking. Because I think that this programming is wonderful, and I really admire the people who've been struggling with this. But I really do think that the tremendous work that people are doing is not getting nearly as much exposure as it needs to, and as it could if the labor movement itself were more cohesive and coherent in terms of getting out these things. I think it's a reflection of the – disorganization is not the right word – maybe just the lack of understanding of how important it is for all these different unions to stick together and to pool and to look at each other's struggles as a common struggle. That is not a new problem in the labor movement. I think a lot of people from outside the labor movement look at the labor movement as some monolithic organization or set of organizations where everybody works together. That is not the way it is. It's much less cohesive than even the public access movement is. I think that the firepower of access programming like that could increase tremendously if access activists and staffers and people who are focused on access from the community perspective would understand what kind of role they could play in getting this kind of labor programming out. You know, if people would pick up those Staley tapes and send them all over the country, it would really make a tremendous difference if that were possible."

GEORGE: "Sally, I wonder if you aren't describing a job that belongs to the **Alliance**?"

SALLY: "Well I think it certainly does."

GEORGE: "I'm just wondering if we can expect the individual labor unions to take that on when they are so pushed anyway, and if we shouldn't consider that that's a job that the Alliance should do. Although not exclusively, of course."

SALLY: "I think that's a very important point, George, because I think the Alliance definitely could do that, and I think that people who are involved in labor access are standing on the edge of something, looking in two different directions, and understanding that if the directions could get themselves together as one direction, the sort of synergy that would happen would really be tremendous. There are a lot of reasons why access activists and labor activists have been in kind of two separate camps. I don't think they are opposed to each other. I just think they're sort of... it's like when you learn about how kids grow up – it's called 'parallel play.' The kids play in the same sandbox, and they're sort of playing the same game but they don't understand that they really are."

> **" I think that what we're looking at, what you're describing, is a vision of a healthier labor movement."**

LARRY: "And access activists have probably, over the years, become confused, rightfully so, when they go to the labor movement, which seems to be a perfectly wonderful idea, and they get no response."

SALLY: "Exactly."

LARRY: "However, there are changes taking place around the country, in the upsurge of militancy in the unions. The insistence that workers want to have a labor movement that is going to fight. This is one of the reasons behind the Kirkland thing, where Kirkland is on his way out. And this internal struggle on the executive board of the AFL-CIO. Because he's doing nothing."

SALLY: "He represents the old guard."

LARRY: "Yes, and it is the old guard - and the old quiescent, you know 'let's get along, let's deals with management, let's have productivity circles' - that's on its way out."

SALLY: "'Let's always vote with the Democratic Party.'"

LARRY: "Oh yes, 'let's support Democrats. They're our friends.' You know, all of this is going, and I think that what we're looking at, what you're describing, is a vision of a healthier labor movement. A healthy labor movement would be doing these things."

GEORGE: "Well, just to make that point a little clearer. I don't think that any union, or a group of unions, can expect to be open to the kind of self-criticism that almost any labor movement needs. And if some group outside of it, like the Alliance, said to those people, 'sure you have the right to speak about the limitations of your union. Sure you have a right to speak about consumer things that don't immediately impact the struggle to get the contract,' etc. If the Alliance could help these people develop a kind of Labor Party philosophy that said "you are speaking for working people, whether or not they are in the unions," then I think that, in the first place, it would give them more support among viewers and would also give them the freedom to feel that they could associate with one another without always having to

See *Labor and Access,* next page...

Labor and Access...

Continued from previous page...
have the approval of the people at headquarters."

SALLY: "I agree with that, George. I have also found that the most dynamic access programming does not come from the upper echelons of the labor unions. It comes from people in a local area, in a local community, getting an idea for a program, going to their local access center. And really, only at the point where that group of people goes to their own union and says 'can we have resources?' or 'can we have lost time, or compensation for our hours that we spent here?' or 'can we have a little money for travel?' or whatever - only at that point does it come down to: 'Well, are you going to challenge the union? Are you going to interview dissident candidates? Are you going to criticize the head of the AFL-CIO?' At that point those questions come up. But the most dynamic programming is the rank-and-file kind of programming that can be not only initiated, but encouraged and distributed among access centers by access activists in local areas. And I think that's a challenge for the Alliance."

GEORGE: "I'm just encouraging us as Alliance members to say 'Gee, why don't we use the Alliance for this kind of thing?'"

LARRY: "What sort of discussions have gone on up to this point? Are there any people that you've talked with? Has the Alliance been talking with labor? I know, we occasionally in UPPNET talk about this question as well."

GEORGE: "Well I'm sure that [Alliance for Community Media Executive Director] Barry [Forbes] is up to his neck in trying to control legislation right now. And so he's looking for labor support for that legislation. I think that it's up to us rank-and-file members of the Alliance to suggest this kind of thing and make it happen."

SALLY: "You know George, I should probably send Barry the list of my 35 producers, so that he can contact them. Because, the thing about this legislation is that people who are actually using access from labor are willing to get their own unions to back up this legislation."

GEORGE: "Sure. I think the whole thing should be done so that support from unions doesn't come from any one group, any one program, it's the whole force of what they're doing. They're giving the public a view of labor that's concerned about all of our welfare. So that I'm encouraging you people who are directly making labor programs to enlarge your vision to include consumer interests and ecology interests as well."

SALLY: "You know, that kind of segues into the question of a **Labor Channel.** One of the ongoing discussions among activists in the labor movement and a struggle that activists have had trying to get the leadership of the labor movement to deal with it, is this idea of having a Labor Channel, and I think people are looking down the road to whether or not there is going to be much protection for public access channels or much expansion, particularly. And the idea of the new 500-channel universe, there is not any reason at all why one of those five hundred channels should not be a channel devoted to the interests of working people. And that does not mean, in my vision, although I know there is a debate about it, that it would be a channel that would just be about the official positions of the labor unions."

"...there is not any reason at all why one of those five hundred channels should not be a channel devoted to the interests of working people."

LARRY: "It would be a disaster if it were."

GEORGE: "But I think that needs to be stated right from the beginning."

SALLY: "That's part of the ongoing debate. It is a struggle. It's like any other. You know, I grew up the daughter of a minister and I'm telling you, churches are just like this too – any big organization, any big national organization or system of organizations is going to have this kind of paralysis and the difficulty of making changes and things like that. So you just kind of chip away at it the best way you can."

LARRY: "There's another issue on this Labor Channel thing which came up at Labor Tent conferences. Would it marginalize labor? If we look at a Labor Channel or public access in general, and not also attack corporate television, is that like leaving corporate television to corporate television, and alternative television marginalized? I think that we need to consider that in addition to developing these alternative television channels, that we have to also bring back to the public's mind the role that corporate television plays. You know, live, global, corporate television. You look at **CNN** and how it will skew any major story. There's lots of programming out there. If it's bureaucracy, if it's **George Meany** shaking hands with **Bill Clinton,** you know, that's going to go south immediately. I think there's a certain hesitancy of the AFL-CIO in moving towards this, because labor television around the country is getting more and more rank-and-file television. In other words, rank-and-file television is defining what labor television is."

SALLY: "That's right. The leadership has really in many ways resisted. It's not just that they've resisted access. It's very difficult for an organization whose leadership is of the generation of the fifties and sixties. It's difficult to get them even to deal with high tech communication at all. It's difficult for them to get computerized. It's difficult for them to agree to use resources for anything that sort of smacks of a change. Getting them to look at the importance of television and at the changes that are coming in the telecommunications industry and at interactive video and all that stuff. It's really a challenge."

LARRY: "We're dragging them kicking and screaming into this. But the new leadership that are coming up are interested in it. The second echelon bureaucracy, they are enthusiastic about these ideas. So I think we just have to keep pushing for the political changes within the labor movement, which I think are arriving, and then there'll be an enormous amount of programming. We just got something from Mexico, covering the **Todos Somos Marcos** [*'We Are All Marcos'* – a large public demonstration in support of the Zapatista uprising] demonstration. Fantastic footage! Incredible! Would blow off the network anything that CNN

Continued on next page...

Labor and Access...

Continued from previous page...
would be running. And hardly anyone sees this. But it's out there."

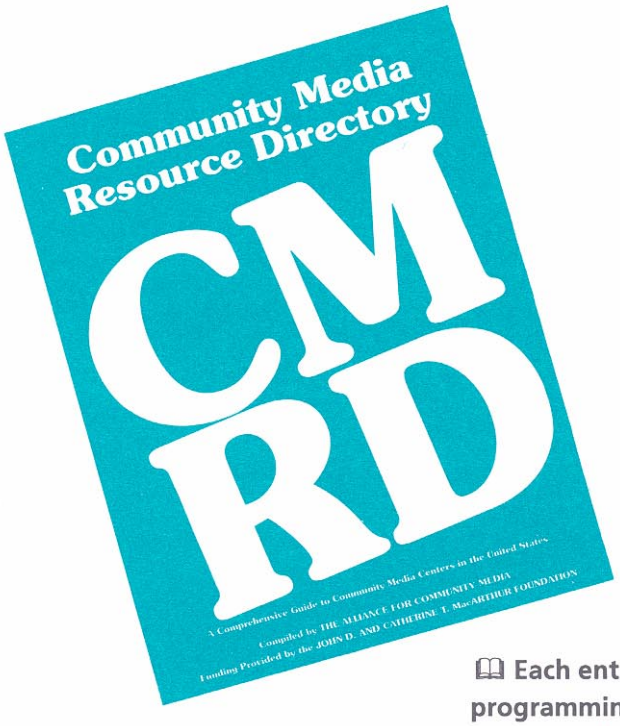
"One other quick thing – because I have to get going to Detroit – the development of computer bulletin boards and e-mail is accelerating among labor video producers and rank-and-file activists and alternative media people. Our ability to network among ourselves is increasing. I'm optimistic and I think this is going to be a very exciting period we are going in to. This conversation is absolutely essential and I'm quite reluctant that I have to tear myself away from it... George, Sally, Uriel, Bob, I apologize, I have to go to Detroit.

(At this point Larry left the discussion.)

SALLY: "I have one other point that was kind of off something that Larry said when he was talking about the Labor Channel and about whether labor would be marginalized if it were relegated to it's own channel. Two things – one is, labor is already marginalized, totally. And the second thing is, that once labor gets the chance to define its own issues and represent its own images, all of a sudden it's not as easy for the mainstream to represent working people and represent the labor movement in as negative a way as they have been doing. Because I think one of the things that my research has really made apparent, that folks tend to overlook and minimize, is that there really is an effect on the mainstream media that access channels and access programming have.

"What happened was that one of the questions I asked my access producers was 'Do you think your labor programming has any effect on the coverage of labor issues in your community by the mainstream media?' Almost without any exception they all said no. But then they went into all these examples of things that had happened that were responses of the mainstream press on issues that they had covered in their programming. I think that is a responsibility of the labor movement to look at that, and I also think it's a good lesson for other access producers. They should not take it lightly, that if they do

Continued on next page...



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Labor and Access...

Continued from previous page...

something in their programming that is really newsworthy, then eventually over a period of time the mainstream media is going to sit up and take notice. The mainstream media really like to marginalize access altogether, but it gets harder and harder if the programming is really good. Labor is exactly the kind of voice that should be on access, because it is a collective community public voice that has been denigrated and marginalized and muffled because of the character of our commercial media for one hundred years. And it is not going to be any better when our friends in Washington get through with telecommunications regulation. It's going to be a hell of a lot worse. This is my soap box right now. I really feel that labor and access have a tremendous amount to give to one another and have a tremendous amount to benefit, if they could just come together and figure out where the commonality lies. And if they don't, I think access's job of maintaining a voice in the community is going to be harder, because they are not going to have the strength of working people behind them. And labor's voice is going to be even more muffled and will never be heard either. It's a crucial question on both sides."

"The value of somebody's identity as a person is not based on what they produce, but on what they consume."

GEORGE: "My own feeling is that, in most other countries in the world, unions are tied into political parties which represent the interests of a group of people, whether or not they are members of an organization. For the most part we have this silly idea that if you lose your job, or stop working in a unionized factory because you are having a baby, you are no longer a member of the union. And your interest then is probably keener in terms of needing political and economic help than when you were working. I feel that if we can get the people involved in labor video to think beyond the strikes, etc., those are the things to make videos about. It's easy to do something on demonstrations. The difficulty is to try to make something that is interesting, that is exciting, that seems of the moment, which is about a more generalized need. And that requires a hell of a lot of skill in production and thought."

SALLY: "One of the things that I found, which addresses that, George, is that most of the time the people who have initiated these programs have really initiated them out of a very strong sense that they are sick of seeing labor represented only as strikes and lockouts. There is this will and enthusiasm on the part of these people to really critique the mainstream media. A lot of the most interesting labor programming has to do with how the media covers labor in general. There is a wonderful program, ***Labor at the Crossroads,*** out of **Hunter College** in New York City, that does this. And that is so important – not only from labor's perspective – it's important in terms of media literacy, in terms of people understanding how the media operate as a commercial system. I would say that the difficulty of getting people to see the importance of labor programming has to do with a deeper problem in American culture about how we see class. There is this illusion that everybody in the United States is either poor or in the middle class. Ninety-five percent of us are in the middle class. When you look at the statistics – I was just reading something today about the fact that, in terms of taxes, the U.S. has the heaviest burden of taxes on working people than any other industrialized country. The U.S. also has the lowest tax rates generally of all industrialized countries, except for Australia and one other, but the burden of those taxes falls way disproportionately on working people and people of moderate incomes. And a lot of that has to do with the fact that people have not been able to articulate a sense of class identity and class pride as working people. It has to do with the very unique American tendency to deny that class exists and to deny that there are political interests tied to those economic positions...."

"...I just want to make one other comment to go back to this idea of identity coming from the media. I think it is really true but I also think there is a deeper question underneath that which has to do with how Americans perceive class. It's that people's identities come from their role in consumption rather than their role in production. The value of somebody's identity as a person is not based on what they produce, but on what they consume. You can be a drug dealer, or somebody who is horrendously overpaid, and you will wind up having higher status in this society than you will if you do an honest day's work. Then we get back to this thing about people who work full time, 40 hours a week, and are beneath the poverty level in this country. We get back to all these economical and political issues and realities which are really based on how difficult it is for our culture and our society to deal with the question of class. How the media, because it is a commercial medium developed an entire language and rhetoric of seeing people as consumers. It's not like it is a conspiracy. It's how things have played out over the years. But if access folks will think about these matters, and think about the importance of doing programming that portrays people as producers, then it becomes clear why labor programming is so important.

GEORGE: "Good point. So you are describing labor programming on a Labor Channel that will bring a much, much wider perspective."

SALLY: "I really agree with you, George. If labor programming is just to allow the top echelons of the unions to speak, we have defeated our purpose. It is certainly an appropriate thing to do, but it is not what the best labor programming is about. The connection, between people who understand the importance of access and people who understand the importance of labor, should be about a broader perspective of labor programming, one that presents people as workers. You know, white collar workers or whatever, but people who work for a living."

Sally Alvarez is a former access center manager who now teaches communications at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Larry Duncan is co-producer of Labor Beat, and a Steering Committee member of Union Producers and Programmers Network (UPPNET). George Stoney is a documentary producer, filmmaker and NYU professor who recently completed The Uprising of '34, *a documentary about union struggles in southern textile mills.*

EVC...

Continued from page 17...

Generating the right kind of atmosphere through a screening goes much farther to interest people in community video than whether or not anyone actually says anything specifically about media. Without a context in which to appreciate community media, there is a danger of it being viewed as "not real" or not as valued as commercial programs. There is the constant comparison with mainstream media – with community programs seen as not measuring up, not as slick or polished – hence not as important. This is why EVC's community video training program is so important. The workshop provides a structure with which to understand the potential uses and impact of community video. Participants are encouraged to come up with ideas for videos that can have a direct impact on the communities they serve. Through producing and using these documentaries, participants come to understand and appreciate how community-produced video can play a vital role in their organizing and educational efforts.

CO-TV. The CO-TV workshop focuses on training staff from various non-profit and community-based organizations. The goal is to have folks trained in media production, then have them go back to their sites and begin their own video workshops with their constituencies.

Manhattan Neighborhood Network launched CO-TV's first two years with the revolving grant they offer. Students from organizations in Manhattan learn video production and get certified to use their professional equipment. The produced works have been cablecast on their access channels.

At the end of a work day, students travel to a professional video environment and shift gears to work with video cameras and editing machines. All of a sudden it's "hands-on," taking control of visual images and deciding what next narration piece is to be included in the video. At CO-TV all students learn all technical aspects of video production.

The beauty of it is that everyone has the same mission, so it is not difficult to become passionate and have motivating discussions on ways to engage video as an organizing tool. Viewing the media more critically helps us keep the focus of why such productions should be done. We analyze several pieces of visual media and discuss who the producers are and who the target audience is and what are the messages being received?

There's a need for a video product that can be representative of a certain group or an issue. But we cannot forget the process. The process itself is really an example of organizing. Folks discuss the work intensively and make sure that they all have a general feeling of solidarity. Folks help each other out, like chiming in when someone needs help with focusing a camera. Feeling comfortable to speak up, against or for a certain issue, learning to look at certain situations in different ways, therefore understanding others, are just a few things that happen naturally when folks get together. Video at CO-TV is used as an amplifier for unheard voices, to educate folks on an issue, to document situations and as a motivation to create groups and thoughts for change.

Pam Sporn is Program Director of EVC's Documentary Workshop Program for high school students. She learned video production alongside her students at an alternative high school in the Bronx where she taught Spanish and History for 11 years. She is also struggling to do her own independent documentary work. Donna Golden is EVC's screening coordinator. She is also an independent producer. Carol Roman is a Community Video Instructor and independent producer.

Had Enough "Interactive" Hype?

A lot of hype and flash have been thrown around the last couple of years regarding interactive this and that, including the information superhighway, Internet, World Wide Web (WWW), interactive bulletin boards, etc.

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FACT: RTC has been in the interactive media business longer than any other U.S. corporation— since 1981. We've also been in cable TV and video since 1968.

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FACT: RTC's RT2 interactive systems currently run on public access, government, educational, senior center, and commercial channels in ten states, at over twenty locations, and abroad.

FACT: RTC now has the **only product** that enables you to offer your viewers not only interactivity with the databases you create locally, but **access to Internet and the WWW** as well! That's right, you can offer your viewers access to Internet and the WWW right on your cable TV channel through RT2.

Oh, one more thing. Commodore Amiga is now ESCOM Amiga. Amiga, the first and only truly media computer is alive and well, and to celebrate RTC is knocking **$500 off the price of our basic RT2 package until Sept. 1, 1995.**

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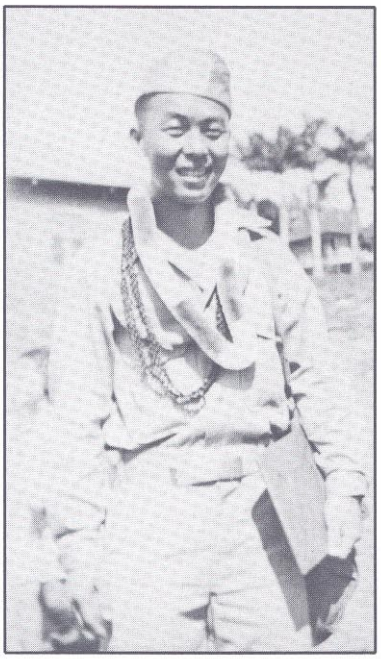
Technology Innovation Center, Oakdale, Iowa 52319

Hawai`i Holocaust Project...

Continued from page 12...

to do it. We had already spent many hours finding sample questionnaires, developing our own interview questions, researching both the Japanese-American and the Jewish stories, determining how to conduct the interviews and which medium to use, meeting with veterans and survivors, getting to know them and, more importantly, allowing them to get to know us and trust us.

Our project had three major goals: to record and preserve the testimonies; to transcribe, edit, annotate and index selected testimonies into two bound volumes; and to produce a documentary. The project became a multi-ethnic, cross-cultural community project and many individuals and groups became involved. The project now has hundreds of hours of videotaped oral history interviews, including thirty-two individual interviews that have been transcribed by the **Center for Oral History** at the **University of Hawai`i at Manoa.** The transcripts were published in 1991 in a two-volume set entitled ***Days of Remembrance: Hawai`i Witnesses to the Holocaust.*** We have recently completed a second printing. The volumes have been distributed to state and university libraries in Hawai`i and other depositories worldwide. Both the **Simon Wiesenthal Center** and the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** have the two volumes as well as the unedited 3/4" videos of the interviewees (for use within the museums). The project has also produced three panel discussions with Jewish interviewees, Nisei interviewees, and then Jewish and Nisei interviewees together. ***The Panel: The First Exchange,*** an edited program from these panel discussions and two series, ***Profile of a Holocaust Survivor*** and ***Profile of an AJA Soldier,*** are currently screening on our local public access channel every Sunday night. We are continuing to edit our interviews into half-hour programs.



"None of this would have been possible without public access."

Our documentary, ***From Hawai`i to the Holocaust: A Shared Moment in History,*** was finally completed in 1993, just in time to enter the **Hawai`i International Film Festival** where it won **The Hawai`i Filmmakers Award.** The film also received a **CINE Golden Eagle Award** for excellence in production, the **Silver Apple Award** from the **National Education Film and Video Festival** and a four-star rating and review from the **National Video Rating Guide for Libraries.** We now have a Japanese version as well. We are currently developing a curriculum guide and companion book to be used by students and teachers from intermediate school through college. Several schools are using the film for their History Day projects.

None of this would have been possible without public access. For our first interview on camera in 1987, we attempted to use a friend's home camcorder. Due to technical and quality problems, it was necessary to redo the entire interview. Earlier, my sons, Los Angeles freelance filmmakers, had advised us to use professionals and professional equipment, but we had a very limited budget. We then contacted **KGMB,** one of our local network television stations, and were able to borrow their 3/4" equipment and a subsidized cameraperson. Shortly thereafter, I contacted **Oceanic Cable** and their community programming division (now **'Olelo**) took an interest in our project. Additionally, my son and co-producer of the documentary made a number of trips home to Hawai`i to work with us. When I first called Oceanic Cable's public access for help in 1987, I was told there would be a one-year waiting period before our group could be trained. I went to the office to plead our case. Within 15 minutes, **Greg Socher,** one of the training crew, said he would volunteer. Very quickly, others began to volunteer – **Matt, Kealii, Sean, Mark, Helen** and numerous others all made the Hawai`i Holocaust Project possible.

We hope that this project and this documentary, which link the life histories of Jews who lived through the horrors of the Holocaust, and the Nisei soldiers who bore witness to those horrors at Dachau, will prove a constant reminder of the endless battle against discrimination and hatred and our responsibility not to be silent bystanders. There are those who continue to deny the past, among them revisionists who say there was no Holocaust or that the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry (AJAs) was justified. Government-sanctioned policies of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and national origin must be recognized and exposed.

When we began this project 10 years ago, both the survivors and AJAs were aging rapidly. We chose oral history because oral history is an historical method that takes into account the value of the life experiences of the ordinary person. Oral history can be a powerful means of gaining insight into the past in a way that cannot be done with traditional historical tools such as paper records alone. Used in conjunction with such historical records, oral history can add a dimension to our knowledge about a particular historical event that traditional historical documents may not: the perspective of the eyewitness. And as Borys so often reminded us, no one had wanted to hear his story before – "why do you care," he would ask over and over – but many people did care and many people are very grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know Borys and other survivors and veterans through Oceanic, 'Olelo and public access. Public access personnel, production and post production equipment and facilities have helped us preserve and cablecast these life stories of people of different races, cultures, languages and religions, people who lived through some of the most destructive events of our time and survived to give voice to those who did not.

Judy M. Weightman is Assistant Professor of Law at the Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai`i at Manoa.

1. On Yom Ha'Shoah, the internationally recognized Day of Remembrance, the Jewish community and others remember the millions who were murdered in the Holocaust and remember that nations are capable of unspeakable evil when bigotry, racism and hatred govern. For several years during Yom Ha'Shoah services at Temple Emanu-El in Hawai`i, I noticed a small group of Japanese Americans. Even in Hawai`i, Japanese Americans are somewhat conspicuous at services. Finally, I asked about their presence and learned of their role in the Holocaust.

Talkin' Access (Ah-oooh!)

The following lyrics arrived in the ***CMR*** mailbox recently from **Greg Vawter,** who warns that "without the experience of hearing my ***Accessaires*** sing *ah-ooh,* the readership may not fully understand the impact of this anthem." But we're going to risk it and run the lyrics anyway. (He's promised to make audio tapes available very soon and has been considering putting a sound byte on some sort of Internet site.) You can e-mail him at vawter@hcca.ohio.gov for more information.

Talkin' Access
Put us on TV!
Ain't there room enough for me?
I'm talkin' access.
Must I be a star?
Can't you take us as we are?
We're talkin' access.
Gimme access! Ah-oooh!
There's a flicker in the neighborhood,
Ah-oooh!
Picture's pretty and the feeling's good.
Uh-huh.
Come together, make our own TV;
Ah-oooh.
'Fore you know it, we're like family.
We're talkin' access,
Shooting our message down a cable line;
With public access,
Working together for a real good time.
When there's something you just got to share,
Ah-oooh.
Take it to the local folks who care. Uh-huh.
Make it come alive with video.
Ah-oooh.
Put it on the schedule, let it show.
We need to know.
We're talkin' access,
Teaching each other helps us all to see...
With public access,
Ev'ryone shares responsibility.
Info highway runnin' down my street.
Ah-oooh.
It's the talk of ev'ryone I meet. Uh-huh.
Turn the TV on and use the phone.
Ah-oooh.
Let us on your video dialtone.
We're talkin' access,
Send out our signal, so we all can be...
On public access,
Neighbors and friends with possibilities.
First Amendment, that's just talk in school.
Ah-oooh.
Ev'rybody knows it's gold that rules.
Uh-huh.
Try to sing out; who would hear my say?
Ah-oooh.
"It ain't commercial son, now go away!
You can pay to play."
We're talkin' access,
Shooting each other puts us on TV.
But public access,
Gives us the tools to build community.
Put us on TV!
Ain't there room enough for me?
I'm talkin' access.
Gimme access!
Ah-oooh....
©1984 & 1995 by Gregory R. Vawter

Greg Vawter is Executive Director of Waycross Community Television in Forest Park, Ohio, as well as Secretary of the ACM.

Netiquette!

Continued from page 24...
electronic frontier and you, like most strangers in a strange land, will from time to time violate them. Don't be surprised if a few self-appointed, jack-booted cybermarshal thugs out there gently correct your behavior. And don't worry...soon you, too, will be confident enough to self-righteously flame some shouting, spamming, cross-posting, low-down snake in the grass cybervarmint!

Next time: *Where does that superhighway lead to?*

Paul LeValley is Executive Director of Arlington (Virginia) Community Television. He can be flamed, spammed or cyber-deputized at paul@channel33.org.

Alliance Information Infrastructure...

Continued from page 5
added.

To subscribe to the Alliance's electronic mail list, send e-mail to: *alliance-nw-request@isu.edu.* In the subject line, type *subscribe.* Leave the body of the message blank, unless your service requires that something appear in the body in order to send transmit the message, in which case type anything you wish (it will not be read). See you online!

Educating our members. A clear part of the committee's mission is to provide education to Alliance members about the emerging and evolving electronic landscape. After all, we are an organization dedicated to empowering citizens to use communication tools. To this end, the committee has provided updates and information in this regular ***CMR*** column. Additionally, look for a handy information booklet at the Boston conference which will provide a bunch of related useful information "at-a-glance." Thanks to **Julianne Murray** for heading up this project.

Finally, the committee is sponsoring an orientation for national board members during the board's fall meeting in order to bring all board members up to speed with the latest and most basic tools of electronic communication. Use of electronic mailing lists, over "snail mail," faxes, conference calls and even face-to-face meetings, will save the national organization and board members thousands of dollars, not to mention speed up communication and enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness. And, of course, having an educated and tools-savvy leadership is essential in order to understand the issues and challenges of this new telecommunications era.

If you are interested in participating on the committee, or just want to be included on the committee's mailing list, send email to me, **Kari Peterson,** at *kapeters@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us.* Everybody's ideas are welcome! Committee members include: **Kari Peterson <kapeters@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us>; Tony Riddle <gaia@mtn.org>; Richard Turner <rdturner@aol.com>; Julianne Murray <jmmurray@aol.com>; Anne C. Mitchell <amitchel@ednet1.osl.or.gov>; Ann Flynn <aflynn@innet.com>; Paul LeValley <paul@channel33.org>;** and **Dirk Koning <koning@igc.org>.**

Kari Peterson is Executive Director of Davis (California) Community Television.

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Join Your Community Media Colleagues! Support the Alliance's Public Policy Fund

Thanks to the generosity of many of your colleagues, the Alliance for Community Media has been successful in pushing our legislative agenda with Congress and in informing you of the results. But our work cannot stop here! The Alliance must now work with the FCC, monitor state legislation, and prepare for our First Amendment case before the Supreme Court! As you know, our current dues structure cannot support an ongoing public policy program. Please join the Public Policy Council by contributing $2,500 or more, or join the Public Policy Network for $500. In the meantime, please thank your colleagues who have made our public policy efforts possible:

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ACCESS SACRAMENTO, Sacramento CA; ACTV21/COLUMBUS COMMUNITY CABLE, Columbus OH; AMHERST COMMUNITY TELEVISION, Amherst MA; BRONX COMMUNITY CABLE PROGRAMMING, Bronx NY; THE BUSKE GROUP, Sacramento CA; CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY TELEVISION, Cambridge MA; CAPE CODE COMMUNITY TELEVISION, South Yarmouth MA; CAPITAL COMMUNITY ACCESS, Salem OR; CINCINNATI COMMUNITY VIDEO, Cincinnati OH; CITIZEN TELEVISION, New Haven CT; CITY OF ST. PAUL, St. Paul MN; COMMUNITY ACCESS CENTER, Kalamazoo MI; EVANSTON COMMUNITY TELEVISION, Evanston IL; FAIRFAX CABLE ACCESS CORP., Fairfax VA; INTER-COMM OF SOUTHERN WISCONSIN CHAPTER, Alliance for Community Media; JONES INTERCABLE/TAMPA, Tampa FL; CARL KUCHARSKI, Somerville MA; LOWELL TELE-COMMUNICATIONS CORP., Lowell MA; MALDEN ACCESS TELEVISION, Malden MA; MANCHESTER COMMUNITY TELEVISION, Manchester NH; MILWAUKEE ACCESS TELECOM. AUTH., Milwaukee WI; NEWTON CABLE ACCESS CORP., Newton Highlands MA; NORTHEAST REGION, Alliance for Community Media; PEGASYS, INC., Enid OK; SALEM ACCESS TELEVISION CORP., Salem MA; SARATOGA COMMUNITY ACCESS, Saratoga CA; SOLON COMMUNITY TELEVISION, Solon OH; SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY ACCESS TV, Somerville MA; SOUTHEAST REGION, Alliance for Community Media; SW OAKLAND CABLE COMMISSION, Farmington Hills MI; THURSTON COMMUNITY TELEVISION, Olympia WA; WAYCROSS COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING BOARD, Forest Park OH

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